UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The People of African Descent in Colonial Oaxaca, 1650-1829

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in History

by

Sabrina Smith

2018

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The People of African Descent in Colonial Oaxaca, 1650-1829

by

Sabrina Smith
Doctor of Philosophy in History
University of California, Los Angeles, 2018
Professor Kevin B. Terraciano, Chair

This study addresses the enslaved and free people of African descent in colonial Oaxaca between the 1650s and 1820s. The presence of African captives and their descendants in Oaxaca has long been silenced in the historiography of the Valley of Oaxaca, Latin America, and the broader African Diaspora. By cross-referencing notarial, judicial, and Inquisition records with censuses and marriage registers, I reconstruct the populations of free-coloreds and slaves in Antequera and its surrounding regions from 1650 to 1829. My notarial investigation involves an analysis of bills of sale, manumission letters, wills, and property inventories produced between 1650 and 1740. Likewise, I examine civil and criminal cases and Inquisition records to reveal the everyday lives and cross-cultural contact between African descent people and other ethnic groups. Based on these records, I find that enslaved people arrived in Oaxaca from areas across the Atlantic and Pacific worlds, including Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Free-persons and slaves met the labor demands of wealthy Spaniards in Oaxaca, and they worked in the city of Antequera as skilled and unskilled laborers, artisans, and professionals during the colonial period.

By the eighteenth century, Antequera became a diverse society comprised of multiple ethnic groups, including Spaniards, Africans, Indians, and mestizos. In the early eighteenth century, the population in the Valley of Oaxaca grew because the indigenous populations had recovered from a series of epidemics during the Conquest. Likewise, the mixed-race populations increased significantly due to a rise in mestizaje. Thus, these inter-ethnic unions contributed to the diversity of this colonial society. By the late colonial period, the definitions of social status changed to include status markers based on race, occupation, property ownership, and access to power. Free coloreds made up the middle and lower classes of this social hierarchy, and they often lived and worked alongside other casta groups who belonged to the same social classes. Although the Spanish colonial state implemented several measures to control casta groups, free and enslaved people used multiple strategies to contest elite expectations of race, forge ties with ethnic others, and construct their own experiences and identities in Oaxaca.

This dissertation of Sabrina Smith is approved.

Anna H. More

Brenda Stevenson

William R. Summerhill

Kevin B. Terraciano, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2018

A mis padres, por todo su apoyo.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGI	Archivo General de Indias
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación (México)
AGPEO	Archivo General del Poder Ejecutivo del Estado de Oaxaca
AHAO	Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Oaxaca
AHJO	Archivo Histórico Judicial del Estado de Oaxaca
AHMCO	Archivo Histórico Municipal de la Ciudad de Oaxaca
AHNO	Archivo Histórico de Notarías del Estado de Oaxaca
APS	Archivo de la Parroquia del Sagrario
BFBV	Biblioteca de la Fundación Bustamante Vasconcelos
BIJC	Biblioteca de Investigación Juan de Córdova

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not be possible without the guidance, support, and friendship of those around me. During my graduate study, I have benefitted from the knowledge, patience, and understanding of my mentors, colleagues, friends, and family. It is with immense joy that I take this opportunity to thank some of the people who helped get me here. First, I thank my dissertation advisor, Kevin Terraciano, for his support, encouragement, and mentorship during my graduate study at UCLA. Kevin continues to be a source of inspiration for his tireless dedication to his work and his students, and I am eternally grateful for everything I have learned from him. To the members of my doctoral committee, William Summerhill, Brenda Stevenson, and Anna More, I thank you for your advice, criticism, guidance, and the countless letters of recommendation you submitted on my behalf. I would also like to thank the staff of the History Department and send a special thank you to Hadley Porter and Eboni Shaw, who listened, answered questions and offered great advice every step of the way. I am also appreciative of the comments, criticisms, and overall feedback I received from Alex Borucki and David Wheat. Their assistance was instrumental in completing Chapter 2, which is a version of the book chapter, "Slave Trading in Antequera and Interregional Slave Traffic in New Spain, 1680-1710." This book chapter will be published in the forthcoming edited volume, *From the Galleons to the Highlands: Slave Trade Routes in the Spanish Americas* with the University of New Mexico Press in Fall 2018.

I could not have accomplished this project without the financial support of UCLA's Graduate Division and several other external institutions. Summer research was made possible with funding from the Graduate Summer Research Mentorship program, as well as grants from the History Department, the Latin American Institute, the Mellon Foundation, and UCMEXUS.

The UCLA Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship offered invaluable support during my graduate study, and a FLAS award helped me learn Portuguese during a summer language immersion program in Salvador, Brazil. Likewise, the Mellon Foundation supported my preliminary summer research, and I was later able to complete 15 months of dissertation research in Oaxaca, Mexico City, and Spain with a Fulbright-García Robles fellowship. I would also like to thank the staff at the UC Humanities Research Institute, and Kelly Anne Brown, in particular, for their support during the last few years.

The support and friendship of my fellow graduate students at UCLA are more important to me than I can express here. Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva has been a generous colleague and his own work on Mexico is a source of inspiration for my own. Likewise, my cohorts and friends in the doctoral program have offered important constructive criticism, and they have also made this experience fun and memorable. I send a special thank you to Susan Rosenfeld, Sam Anderson, and Selah Johnson, all of whom were my peers in the Ph.D. program and are now some of my closest friends. Their love and humor, and their brilliance helped me get through the grind of graduate school. I joined the program with Nilce Wicks, and Michelle Masaye Kiso, Pauline Lewis, and I truly value our friendship. I am also grateful for my conversations with the Latin Americanists, Cassia Roth, Daniel Franken, Fernando Serrano, José Luis Serrano Nájera, Josue Lima Nobrega Junior, María Ornelas, Rebecca Duffendach, Xochitl Flores-Marcial, Kendy Rivera, Esteban Córdoba, and Ricardo García. Similarly, Juan Pablo Mercado, Winter Schneider, Lori De Lucia, Ceren Abi, Nana Osei-Opare, Cailey Hall, Helga Zambrano, and Carolina Beltrán have been wonderful colleagues and friends.

I could not have completed my dissertation research without the assistance of colleagues and friends in Mexico. Namely, archivists in Oaxaca City offered constant help and expertise as I

navigated the city's rich ethnohistorical archives. Socorro Rodríguez Cortez and Lérida Moya Marcos, you are true experts of Oaxaca's notarial archive, and I am forever grateful for all your help. I would also like to thank the staff at the Biblioteca Francisco de Burgoa, and specifically, Penélope Orozco Sánchez, Ildefonso (Poncho) Bautista Cabrera, Carlos Armando Echeverría López, Jesús Ramírez, and Carlos Garía Maldonado for taking me in on a daily basis. I am also indebted to the staff in Oaxaca's judicial archive, and specifically, Israel Garrido, for answering my dozens of questions. The Centro Académico y Cultural San Pablo was my academic home in Oaxaca City. I would like to thank Sebastian van Doesburg for sponsoring me during my dissertation research year. Similarly, I am grateful to the staff at the Biblioteca de Investigación Juan de Córdova, and especially to Claudia Ballesteros César, for her friendship and assistance with archival material and paleography. Finally, I would like to send a big thank you to my fellow researchers, scholars, and friends in Oaxaca and Mexico City. María Elisa Velázquez, Maira Cristina Córdova Aguilar, Luis Sanchez-Lopez, Jorge Ramirez, Rafael Vásquez, Tatyana Kleyn, Rhonda Brulotte, Selene García, John Milstead, Veronica Coronel, Leticia García, Abel Garibay, Gerardo Rivera, and all the BlackWOD crew, muchísimas gracias!

My parents, Violeta and Diego Smith, and my sister, Suleyma, have been tremendously supportive of my academic career. We lived abroad for most of my childhood, but our family always remained together. They instilled in me a love of travel and a natural curiosity to learn about and embrace different cultures and people. I believe this is what pushed me to become an academic. Their love and encouragement, and their energy and their drive, have made me who I am today, and I am forever grateful. To my extended family in Philly and LA, thank you for encouraging me to keep pursuing my dreams. Likewise, my in-laws, Radica and Roy Ali, have been a constant source of unconditional love and positivity.

Finally, I must express my love and gratitude for my spouse, Myles. Your enthusiasm and your dedication to your research is always humbling. Myles, I would not have been able to complete this dissertation without your endless support, words of encouragement, confidence in my abilities, and willingness to help in any way possible. You are my partner, my colleague, and my best friend. I admire your optimism and thank you for everything you have done for us.

VITA – SABRINA SMITH

EDUCATION

C. Phil., History, University of California, Los Angeles, March 2014
M.A., History, University of California, Los Angeles, March 2014
B.A., Anthropology and Spanish, University of California, Santa Barbara, June 2006

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, & AWARDS

2017-2018	Dissertation Year Fellowship, History Department, UCLA
2016-2017	E. Bradford Burns History Department Fellowship, UCLA
2015-2016	Graduate Research Mentorship, UCLA
2014-2015	Fulbright IIE Student Grant, United States Department of State
2013	UC MEXUS Student & Postdoctoral Small Research Grant
2012	Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship for Portuguese, United States Department of State
2011-2012	Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship, UCLA

PUBLICATIONS

2018 "Slave Trading in Antequera and Interregional Slave Traffic in New Spain, 1680-1710" in *From the Galleons to the Highlands: Slave Trade Routes in the Spanish Americas*, Alex Borucki, David Eltis and David Wheat, eds. (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, in press).

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS

2017 Colonial Categories and Constructions of Race in Oaxaca, 1777-1824. American Society for Ethnohistory, Oaxaca City, Mexico, October 11-13 (forthcoming).

2017 The Lives of African Descendants in Spanish America: A Case Study of Colonial Oaxaca. Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora, Seville, Spain, November 7-11.

2016 The African Diaspora and Slave Trade to Latin America: Its Scope, Experiences, and Legacies. K-12 Educators' Professional Development Workshop on "Beyond Borders:

Tracing the Movements of Peoples Throughout the Americas," Latin American Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, June 24.

2016 Slavery in Oaxaca City. Brazil Research Seminar, History Department, University of California, Los Angeles, March 8.

2015 Cross-Cultural Contact in Spanish Colonial Cities: A Study on People of African Descent in Eighteenth-Century Oaxaca. The Southwest Seminar Consortium on Colonial Latin America. Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas, October 22-24.

2015 Slavery, Manumission and Coartación in Eighteenth-Century Antequera. The Status, 'Race' and Color in the Atlantic World (STARACO) Summer Program on Freedoms and Slaveries in the Atlantic World. Université de Nantes, France, June 22-26.

2015 Urban Slavery in New Spain: A Study on Oaxaca City, 1680-1710. American Historical Association, New York, NY, January 2-6.

2014 Social Status of Free Pardos and Mulatos in Eighteenth-Century Oaxaca. The Harriet Tubman Institute and The National Institute of Anthropology and History Summer Institute on Slavery, Memory and Citizenship, Mexico City, Mexico, August 18-22.

2014 Social Status of People of African Descent in Colonial Oaxaca. Study of the Americas Conference, Department of Latin American Studies, California State University, San Bernardino, April 25.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

When the Holy Office of the Inquisition interrogated Miguel de la Flor on May 17, 1664, he revealed that he had lived in captivity since his childhood, and through his testimony, he exposed the life of an ordinary slave in the city of Antequera. As a child, Miguel was a domestic slave with his four siblings and an Angolan mother. His father, whom he never met, was a traveling merchant from Galicia, Spain. During his adolescence, Miguel was resold several times and forced to perform various kinds of labor in domestic service, shop keeping, and the trade of valuable goods. He also learned to read and write from free coloreds. In his adult life, Miguel would eventually interact with residents of many ethnicities including Spanish merchants and religious clerics, *mestizos,* Indians, free coloreds, and other enslaved women and men. Ultimately, Miguel's background and his interactions with ethnic others expose the quotidian life in Antequera as a diverse colonial society with exchanges among people of different ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes.

The greater Valley of Oaxaca, including its provincial capital of Antequera, was dominated by diverse indigenous populations before Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century, and their resistance to Spanish control would shape life in the Valley and the city throughout the colonial era. Likewise, the post-conquest recovery of the indigenous population and the growth of *casta* groups would make Antequera a diverse urban center comprised of African captives, creole slaves, free coloreds, mestizos, Indians, and Spaniards. Moreover, due to Antequera's geographic location, the city would develop a unique relationship with ties to both coasts, central Mexico and Santiago de Guatemala. In this context, African descent groups represented nearly

one-quarter of the city's overall population in the early-to-mid colonial period. The African descent population later tapered off in the late colonial period.

The primary objective of this dissertation is to examine the African Diaspora to Oaxaca, Mexico. The Diaspora extended to many regions in the Atlantic and Pacific worlds, but I focus on Antequera and its environs because this region is known for its diverse indigenous populations and because African descent people were most prevalent during the colonial period. Specifically, I have chosen to focus on the African descent population in Oaxaca in the second half of the colonial period, from 1650 to 1829. The beginning of this period followed the separation of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in 1640, which officially cut off Spain's access to transatlantic slave traffic and eventually led to a decline in the number of African arrivals to New Spain. Consequently, interregional slave traffic also increased in the colony in the 1650s, and a growing number of creole and *bozal* captives worked as urban and plantation slaves in the Valley of Oaxaca. Although enslaved men and women labored in Antequera and its surrounding regions as early as the 1540s, this population did not experience steady growth until the mid-seventeenth century. I end this study in the early nineteenth century when the African descent population seemingly declined and was eventually erased from the historical record. The 1790s, for instance, was the last decade in which racial classifications were consistently used in recording official records. In the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Antequera's residents would experience a transition to Independence, an official end to the utility of colonial categories, and the formal abolition of slavery.

The rise and apparent decline of the African descent population are most evident in archival records from the second half of the colonial period. The Archivo Histórico de Notarías del Estado de Oaxaca (AHNO) provides a narrative of slavery because it contains at least 2,000

notarial transactions involving enslaved people. My notarial investigation focuses on the slave trade from 1680 to 1710 because of this abundance of slave sales, trades, and donations that occurred during the irregular slave trading period that followed the separation of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns. Likewise, I examine the lives of free and enslaved people between the 1660s and the late eighteenth century because these groups are most evident in the archival record during this period. To trace the public and private lives of free and enslaved people, I rely on notarial records, civil and criminal cases, Inquisition records, as well as quantitative sources such as marriage registers and census data. In short, Oaxaca City's archives are full of rich ethnohistorical data that document the experiences, interactions, and subjectivities of African descent people living and working in the provincial capital of Antequera.[1]

The second goal of my project is to investigate the social status of free coloreds in late eighteenth-century Antequera. I have concentrated on the 1790s because comprehensive records like census data are not available for Antequera before 1777. Other quantitative sources, including tribute records, marriage registers, and ecclesiastical censuses offer some insight into Antequera's population size and diversity in the early-to-mid colonial period, but these sources generally did not represent the city's entire population. Therefore, it is difficult to analyze the social status of free coloreds in relation to other ethnic groups without a comprehensive source such as the 1792 census, which I rely on in this study. With this quantitative data, I am able to uncover and examine the occupations, social classes, and meanings of racial classifications in Antequera in the late colonial period.

[1] Since the city's founding in 1529, the provincial capital was named Antequera. The city's name changed to Oaxaca City after Mexican Independence in the nineteenth century. However, a limited number of colonial records refer to the city as "Ciudad de Oaxaca" or "Guaxaca."

The third objective of my dissertation is to contribute to the growing historiography of Oaxaca. The Valley of Oaxaca was comprised of a small Spanish population with a large and diverse indigenous population in the colonial period. Similarly, the provincial capital of Antequera became the third largest city in New Spain, and it also included a Spanish minority with a greater number of *castas* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Despite the prevalent indigenous populations in the Valley of Oaxaca, the historical archives in this region indicate that Antequera had a considerable population of African descendants in the colonial period. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, hundreds of African-born and American-born slaves were sold to residents in Antequera. During this time, bondsmen and bondswomen labored in the homes of Spanish elites, worked in the shops of artisans, sold goods near the *plaza mayor,* and they helped build the city's streets, buildings, and even Antequera's cathedral. The historiography of Oaxaca, however, does not reflect the presence of this African descent population. Except for one study, there is no other full-scale examination of African descent people in colonial Oaxaca, when this population was most abundant in the region.[2]

The study of Africans and their descendants in Mexico has grown substantially since the 1990s. Grassroots projects have collaborated with prominent Mexican institutions, including Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM) and the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) to bring studies of an Afro-Mexican past and present to the forefront of academic and political discussions. Led by Luz María Martínez Montiel, researchers of Mexico's Third Root project called for recognition of African descent people in Mexico in the 1990s. Likewise, scholars such as Norma Ángelica Castillo Palma, María Elisa Velázquez, and Ursula Camba Ludlow have produced ground-breaking studies on cultural representation, enslaved

[2] See Maria Cristina Córdova Aguilar, *Población de origen africano en Oaxaca Colonial, 1680-1700.*

women, and the labor of African descent people in New Spain. Scholars in the U.S. academy have sparked new perspectives and research questions on colonial and contemporary African descent populations as well. Building on Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán's pioneering study, *La población negra de Mexico*, Herman Bennett, Ben Vinson III, and Frank T. Proctor captured groups and behaviors that reveal African descent people in Mexico as not only enslaved laborers, but also as militiamen, litigants, and as individuals who forged ties within their ethnic groups and created Diaspora identities in the processes of capture, enslavement, and colonization. My dissertation relies on these studies that consider the colonial past instrumental to understanding the broader Diaspora and the construction of social identities in present-day Mexico.

Collectively, research on the African descent population in colonial and modern Mexico is helping to reshape the public's perception of this population and its heritage. People of African descent in Mexico remain silenced in educational curricula. However, the work of historians has led to Mexico's participation in the UNESCO Slave Route Project and the International Decade for People of African Descent, which have funded the building of sites of historical memory throughout Mexico. Still, most Mexicans do not have access to the plethora of studies emerging from both the U.S. and Mexican academies. Thus, there is limited progress, and the general perception of contemporary African descent people is that they are only concentrated around the port of Veracruz and the Costa Chica, in the present-day states of Guerrero and Oaxaca. One major shift in this understanding is currently in place. Because of the efforts of the activist group, *México Negro* and preliminary studies conducted by the Mexican census bureau, the Mexican government recognized 1.38 million people of African descent in Mexico in 2015. And for the first time in Mexican history, the term "black" will be included as an official category in the 2020 national census. While this is a significant accomplishment for contemporary blacks in

Mexico, the classifications and construction of black identities in Mexico and the broader Diaspora are historically complex.

Whereas most ethnographic and ethnohistorical studies focus on the diverse indigenous groups residing in the Valley of Oaxaca, only a limited number of scholars examine African descent populations who lived and worked in the region in the colonial period. While indigenous groups represented the vast majority of the region's inhabitants, studies that address diversity in the Valley should also consider other ethnic groups, including African descent people. Given the abundance of notarial and judicial data housed in Oaxaca City's archives, thousands of historical documents cite African descent men and women as 1) enslaved people, 2) practicing Catholics, 3) property owners, 4) free-colored artisans, merchants, and militiamen, and 5) as individuals who contested Spanish colonial rule.

Given the varied roles and statuses of people in colonial Oaxaca, I use the overarching terms of "African descent people" and "coloreds" to refer to any person of African origin or descent. Although these terms might be misconstrued to suggest an over-generalization of the African descent populations, I only rely on these terms to differentiate these individuals from other ethnic groups such as Spaniards, mestizos, and Indians. I prefer to distinguish individuals in the group of "coloreds" and "African descent people" by the colonial categories that appear in the historical record. Hence, by specifying the categories of free or enslaved, and bozal or creole, for instance, I respect the cultural, juridical, and social differences that existed within the category of African descent people. Most importantly, however, I use the categories of casta to reveal how coloreds were categorized and to show the ways in which they articulated their social identities in various colonial spaces. In other words, my project emphasizes the diversity of experiences among people who lived in the African Diaspora.

I privilege the use of terminology that appears in the historical record. Whenever possible, I try to distinguish between racial labels that colonial officials imposed on colonial subjects and the way people self-identified. Despite the negative connotations tied to the racial identifiers of *negro* and mulato, I use these classifications because, in many instances, the records do not contain any other descriptions of a person's status or identity. The term negro generally referred to a dark-skinned individual of "pure" African descent, born in Africa or the Americas. In contrast, a mulato was most often the offspring of a Spaniard and negro/a. There were also color associations, such as *mulato blanco,* tied to the status of mulato. In these instances, I follow the categorization as it appears in the archival record. I do not use the term *moreno* because it rarely ever appears in Oaxaca's archival sources. I do, however, include the terms *pardo/a* and *morisco/a* because they appear in records as early as the 1660s and as late as the 1790s. In the context of Antequera's colonial society, pardo/a generally referred to a high-ranking person of African descent, whereas morisco/a referred to the offspring of a Spaniard and a mulato/a. I must add that the term pardo/a, in particular, was often used to express a higher social status to that of mulatos. In multiple judicial cases, colonial officials labeled individuals as mulatos, but these individuals self-identified as pardos in their testimonies. This action offers some insight into how these individuals perceived themselves in the local social hierarchy. There is no clear pattern in the use of pardo/a that distinguished pardos from mulatos because those who often self-identified as pardos held the same occupations and marital status of mulatos. However, many people who self-identified as pardos were property-owning residents in Antequera.

For enslaved people, I use the terms bozal and creole to differentiate between African-born and American-born slaves. These categories represent different experiences in the Diaspora

regarding capture, enslavement, and freedom, and thus, I attempt to include these classifications whenever they appear the historical record. Likewise, I indicate the place of origin or ethnic monikers of African-born slaves to add complexity to our understanding of the identities and experiences of enslaved people. Most bozal slaves in Antequera arrived from ports in West Central Africa (Angola, Luanda, Congo), and a smaller number of people embarked in West Africa (labeled as Bran and Arara) and East Africa (Mozambique). The terms *criollo* and *ladino* were indicators of a person accustomed to Iberian society and culture. I find that the latter term was generally applied to indigenous persons, but on rare occasions, these terms were used for bozal slaves in the early colonial period. Instead, in most circumstances, the term criollo referred to an American-born slave, and bills of slave sale generally indicate the point of origin and names of former slaveholders. Based on this information, I argue that most creole slaves in Antequera were born in the city or they arrived from other parts of Mesoamerica, Peru, and the Caribbean.

Juridical status was fundamental to the experiences of African descent people in Oaxaca. In comparison to enslaved people, free-coloreds inherently experienced more freedoms as wage laborers, artisans, shopkeepers, and landowners. However, free coloreds were still subject to tribute obligations, and the Spanish colonial state often controlled their rights and movement in the colony. As my dissertation illustrates, the lives of African descent people were not entirely defined by Spanish colonial institutions or elites. Free and enslaved women and men found ways to contest colonial expectations of race and oppose colonial legislation to ultimately determine their own experiences in Antequera and its surrounding regions. For some enslaved people, this agency involved flight from slaveholders, a refusal to work, or complaints of mistreatment to the Spanish colonial courts. Free-persons on the other hand, either rejected or modified their status

within the city's social hierarchy. Upwardly mobile castas, for instance, modified their social status through intermarriage, occupation, or by expressing their self-identification in the courts. The vast majority of pardos and mulatos, however, belonged to the middle and lower classes, where race did not always affect everyday exchanges and transactions with other lower-class castas. Some of these individuals married or resided with other casta groups such as mestizos and Indians. Therefore, juridical status, race, and skin color affected the social status of free coloreds and their access to certain occupations, but it did not always shape the quotidian life of lower class castas.

The lives of African descent people did not exist in a vacuum, and thus, we must consider their experiences within the context of Antequera's multi-ethnic society. Indigenous groups such as the Zapotecs and Mixtecs inhabited Oaxaca long before the arrival of Spaniards, and these groups would make up the greater part of the population in the region throughout the colonial period. Along with recovery of the native population after the Spanish conquest, casta populations grew exponentially during the seventeenth century. In addition to the trade of African captives, a minority of slaves from the Philippines were trafficked and subjected to captivity in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hence, by the 1700s, Antequera grew from a provincial trading post to a diverse urban center with ongoing cross-cultural contact. My dissertation not only analyzes the presence and status of African descent people in Oaxaca, but it also evaluates inter-ethnic interactions, and the everyday and extraordinary experiences of these individuals who lived and worked in Antequera and its surrounding regions.

By examining Oaxaca's notarial, judicial, municipal, and parish records, I demonstrate the ways in which African descent people endured enslavement, and I show how free coloreds contributed to the growing urban society of Antequera between 1660 and 1792. My dissertation

thus addresses the following research questions: 1) How did African descent people arrive in Oaxaca, and what was the nature of transatlantic, interregional, and inter-colonial slave traffic to this region? 2) What type of labor did bondsmen and bondswomen perform in Antequera and its environs? 3) What were the paths to freedom for enslaved people in Oaxaca, and how did they find liberty both within and outside the parameters of Spanish colonialism? 4) How did free coloreds define their own experiences and social identities in Antequera? 5) What did it mean to be a person of African descent in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Antequera?

This dissertation project has several shortcomings, which I hope to address in completing the book manuscript. Admittedly, my dissertation does not address every aspect of the lives of free and enslaved people in Oaxaca. Such an endeavor would entail more time to analyze the particularities of religion, cross-cultural contact, and the interplay between colonial subjects and colonial institutions. For the most part, I rely on notarial, judicial, and Inquisition records, but I do not analyze the latter sources for religiosity or syncretic cultural practices. Instead, I combine Inquisition records with other legal and notarial sources to understand how enslaved people navigated various colonial spaces in Antequera. I hope to expand this project to include an analysis of the recreation of African religious practices in my book manuscript, which will build upon my findings in this dissertation. Likewise, I have privileged marriage records and census data from Antequera to reconstruct the free African descent population in the late colonial era. By the nineteenth century, free coloreds had nearly disappeared from the city's notarial records, and thus, I believe it is necessary to trace individuals, families, and communities through the end of the colonial period. I aim to expand this approach to include the nineteenth century in the book manuscript because it is critical to address the apparent decline of free coloreds in the context of Mexican Independence and the abolition of slavery. In writing this dissertation, I have

also favored local records to produce a social history of the African descent population in colonial Oaxaca. The rich ethnohistorical archives in Oaxaca City contain a wealth of material that document the population, experiences, changes, and actions of free and enslaved people in Antequera and its surrounding regions. In total, I consulted sources from eight archives in Oaxaca City, including the notarial, judicial, ecclesiastical, municipal, parish, and state archives, as well as private collections in two of the city's libraries. Hence, I privilege the thousands of untapped local records in Oaxaca's archives, and supplement these sources with material from Mexico's national archive and the Archive of the Indies.

This dissertation draws on a framework from social history and studies on the Diaspora. Specifically, I attempt to contextualize the everyday experiences of free and enslaved men and women in the broader changing society of Antequera. In this sense, I emphasize the lives and perspectives of colonial subjects and marginalized groups who traditionally remain absent from "official" narratives in Mexican history. This approach thus entails reading both along and against the grain of historical records to address questions of agency, resistance, and the negotiation of status in the broader Spanish colonial world.[3]

Throughout this project, I have attempted to privilege the thousands of unstudied sources in Oaxaca's regional archives. Oaxaca's notarial archive contains thousands of records involving African descent people from 1680 through 1838. Its judicial archive has several hundred documents on this population dating from 1568 to 1825. Likewise, the parish archives hold 65 boxes of marriage and baptismal records from 1681 to 1824. The city's municipal, state, and ecclesiastical archives contain hundreds of records on free and enslaved people from as early as 1529 and as late as the 1780s. The private collections at the Biblioteca de Investigación Juan de

[3] See Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense.*

Córdova and the Biblioteca de la Fundación Bustamante Vasconcelos contain a limited number of records, including official correspondence, civil cases, and property inventories from the late eighteenth century, as well as censuses from 1812 and 1824. In addition to this abundance of rich ethnohistorical material from Oaxaca's regional archives, I also analyze records from Mexico City's Archivo General de la Nación (AGN) and Seville's Archivo General de Indias (AGI).

My approach to examining these thousands of archival records involves cross-referencing documentation and searching for the voices of free and enslaved people. To document the volume and routes of slave traffic and the history of slavery in the Valley of Oaxaca, I analyze bills of slave sale, property inventories, and wills. Likewise, I trace the origins of African captives and creole slaves by following their slaveholders. Aside from this quantitative analysis, I consider slaves' paths to legal and extralegal freedom by examining manumission letters and civil cases. I also investigate the quotidian life of free and enslaved people through civil and criminal cases and Inquisition records. Although these sources are filtered through the perspectives of colonial institutions and officials, they still indicate the actions, voices, and understandings of free and enslaved people. In addition, I cross-reference these documents with notarial, municipal, and parish data to reconstruct the social networks of free-persons and bondsmen and bondswomen. Finally, I rely on quantitative records such as censuses and marriage records to document the presence and social status of free-coloreds living in late colonial Antequera.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation is a social history of African descent people in colonial Oaxaca. In writing this study, I have drawn from the framework and methodologies of social history,

ethnohistory, and the growing body of scholarship on the African Diaspora. To examine the lives of both free and enslaved people, I examine broader processes and changes in Oaxaca, as well as the everyday experiences and interactions between African descent people and ethnic others. For this reason, I have followed Rachel O'Toole's approach to "destabilizing the fixed notions of casta."[4]

According to O'Toole, we must understand the factors within casta categories that bound colonial subjects to colonizers' and slaveholders' demands and consider the elements that could be negotiated, as well. Thus, these areas of negotiation reveal the instability of casta categories, as colonial institutions and Spanish elites used them. Moreover, this pushback against elite constructions of race helps us understand the interplay between colonial law and everyday practice because people of African and indigenous descent were able to claim, deny, or even redefine the meanings of casta classifications.[5] In short, Africans and their descendants understood their legal casta in their everyday lives and in their interactions with the Spanish colonial state, and in turn, they used legal claims to negotiate their position in the broader social structures of Spanish America.

Accounts of the histories and interactions between people of African and indigenous descent in Spanish America remain divided. Scholars such as Matthew Restall argue that informal or unstructured exchanges occurred in public spaces such as open markets, textile mills, and haciendas. Other scholars support the idea that people of African and indigenous descent did not coexist. Frederick Bowser, for instance, emphasizes that colonial law and sociopolitical organization such as the *República de Españoles,* and the *República de Indios,* separated

[4] Rachel Sarah O'Toole, *Bound Lives: Africans, Indians, and the Making of Race in Colonial Peru* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 2.

[5] Ibid.

indigenous people from those of African descent. Likewise, Andrew Fisher illustrates that ethnic tensions existed between Indians and free coloreds in the highlands of Oaxaca. While these conflicts probably occurred in rural areas that were dominated by indigenous groups and included a minority of Spaniards, this was not always the case in the multi-ethnic society of Antequera. Nahua elites occasionally complained of pardos, mulatos, and mestizos abusing their power or trespassing into their *barrios* in the eighteenth century. However, an abundance of archival records including wills, property inventories, civil and criminal cases, census data, and marriage records suggest that at least half of all free and enslaved people lived and worked with, celebrated, and engaged in minor disputes with indigenous people in Antequera. Therefore, I argue that Afro-indigenous interactions in the city and its surrounding regions were not overtly hostile, nor were they always amicable.

This dissertation builds upon the growing body of scholarship on the diverse populations of Oaxaca, and it contributes to studies on the African Diaspora. The scholarly discourse on the diversity of Oaxaca cannot omit the free and enslaved population, who were most prevalent during the colonial era. These women, men, and children often lived and labored alongside indigenous people in the homes of Spanish elites in Antequera, and on haciendas and plantations in the Valley of Oaxaca. Moreover, the lower social classes in Antequera were comprised of free coloreds, mestizos, Indians, and Spaniards, which indicates that indeed, these populations coexisted and even traded with one another on a daily basis. Similarly, studies on the African Diaspora must also look beyond the plantation complex and the context of large urban centers. By focusing on the provincial capital of Antequera, I have uncovered cross-cultural contact and the lives of free and enslaved people in multiple contexts, such as legal and religious spaces, as well as the properties of Spanish elites and the homes of free coloreds. Hence, the city of

Antequera has enabled me to consider both intimate and public spaces to better understand the agency and subjectivities of free and enslaved people of African descent. A growing number of scholars of the Diaspora are looking beyond traditional locations and populations of study. Historians such as Rachel O'Toole, Herman Bennett, and Ben Vinson III are no longer uncovering agency, and instead, they seek to assume agency and analyze internal political structures and kinship dynamics of Diaspora communities that were possibly defined by the institution of slavery or racial hierarchies.

The work of Douglas Cope has been instrumental in the development of this project. In *The Limits of Racial Domination,* Cope reveals that Spaniards longed for a hierarchical and controlled social order in which "racial difference marked and determined status."[6] To maintain the status quo, Spanish colonial officials implemented a system of rights, privileges, and obligations that would solidify racial divisions. In everyday life, however, urban castas and plebeians often rejected, resisted, and manipulated the social hierarchy for their own benefit. As the casta group grew in the late seventeenth century, the Two-Republic model and the early colonial categories of Spaniard, Indian, and African were rendered useless. Instead, the *sistema de castas* developed into a complex socioeconomic structure that intertwined racial categories with economic classes. Only upwardly mobile castas were interested in this social hierarchy because they attempted to secure or negotiate their social position through marriage and occupation. But for many castas, elite constructions of race had little meaning or effect on the everyday interactions between people of African and indigenous descent.

The work of John Chance has also been central to creating a framework for this dissertation. In *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca*, Chance examines the social structure and

[6] Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico, 1660-1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 161.

race relations in Antequera from the sixteenth century through the eighteenth century. He argues that despite the high degree of mestizaje, Antequera was indeed a class-based society with an absence of racial consciousness among casta groups. He also finds that race determined a person's social status in the early colonial period, but by the eighteenth century, social status was defined by occupation, property ownership, and access to power. Building on this ground-breaking work, I contend that race mattered throughout the colonial period. By focusing on the African descent population specifically, I found that the free and enslaved population in Antequera was in fact much larger than what scholars previously considered. Likewise, by considering inter-ethnic interactions and the negotiation of social status, I argue that race was significant to Spanish elites and upwardly mobile castas, but it had little effect on the lives of lower-class castas. Most importantly, however, I argue that occupation, property ownership, and access to power defined a person's status in the late colonial period, but race also determined an individual's ranking in Antequera's social hierarchy.

This dissertation also builds upon the body of scholarship on the African Diaspora. A growing number of studies are examining Afro-Latin American subjectivities through the institution of slavery, paths to freedom, occupations, resistance, and the negotiation of colonial legislation.[7] For instance, as Ben Vinson suggests free-colored militias in late-colonial New Spain fostered a "pardo and moreno racial identity" through their corporate positions.[8] Although colonial legislation and slaveholders shaped the lives of enslaved people, these individuals were able to counter slaveholders and ultimately change power structures within slavery. Stuart

[7] See Rachel O'Toole, "As Historical Subjects: The African Diaspora in Colonial Latin American History."

[8] Ben Vinson, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 5.

Schwartz, for instance, shows how Hausa rebels waged war against slaveholders and European elites in nineteenth-century Bahia. Other forms of resistance involved flight, petitions to the King, or even a refusal to work. Many of these enslaved subjectivities are tempered by narratives of the quotidian realities of slavery. As Frank T. Proctor and Catherine Komisaruk illustrate, enslaved women and men endured harsh labor, mistreatment, and violence on a regular basis, and they also found ways to challenge slaveholders in the Spanish colonial courts or through flight. My thesis project is attentive to both the material realities of free and enslaved people, as well as the strategies that these individuals employed to define their own experiences and lives in Antequera. Thus, in analyzing free and enslaved subjectivities, I attempt to also give attention to the context of the changing colonial era and the overarching structures that likely shaped the lives of free and enslaved people in Antequera and its environs.

This project also complicates our understanding of slave traffic to the Americas. The transatlantic slave trade to New Spain reached its peak in the late sixteenth century and diminished after the separation of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in 1640. Despite this decline in slave traffic, Tatiana Seijas and Pablo Sierra argue that scholars have underestimated the number of African arrivals to the colony in the second half of the seventeenth century. My dissertation builds upon their analysis of the transatlantic slave trade by reevaluating the interregional and intercolonial extensions of slave traffic to the Valley of Oaxaca. Hence, I contend that while the transatlantic slave trade diminished after 1640, the intercolonial and interregional traffic of black and mulato slaves continued alongside transatlantic slave traffic, and in even greater numbers than previously known. A limited number of African arrivals through Acapulco also sheds light on transpacific trading networks from Manila. Therefore, my

project turns the focus to internal and inter-colonial slave trading, which contributed to the import of both African-born and American-born slaves.

The slave trade to the Valley of Oaxaca was significantly smaller than that of Puebla or Mexico City, but the growing city of Antequera and the absence of a native labor force created a demand for slave labor in the city and its environs. Antequera was not involved in major capitalistic activity in the sixteenth century, but the city grew steadily in the first half of the seventeenth century, and it included a sizable slave population. During this period, Spanish elites relied on slave labor to construct the city's streets and buildings, to provide domestic service, and to help produce and sell valuable goods such as cochineal. By the late seventeenth century, Antequera remained an important way station for the traffic of goods and enslaved people that connected Veracruz, Mexico City, and Puebla with the Kingdom of Guatemala.

Antequera is a critical site to study race and ethnicity because of the city's social and economic growth in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. During this period, the casta populations grew along with the recovery of the native populations in the region. In addition to these demographic changes, a large part of the slave population obtained legal freedom during this period. Similarly, the eighteenth century was a critical period for examining social status and cross-cultural contact. Antequera was already a diverse urban center, and the cochineal boom in the mid-to-late eighteenth century sparked a revival of the textile industry in the city. By the 1790s, free coloreds continued to work alongside mestizos, Indians, *castizos,* moriscos, and Spaniards as artisans, professionals, and laborers. In addition to working with other casta groups, a sizeable number of free coloreds intermarried with other ethnic groups.

Outline

As an introduction to the African Diaspora to Oaxaca, Chapter 1 discusses why the Valley of Oaxaca, and its provincial capital, Antequera, are important locations for the study of race and ethnicity. This chapter provides the historical context for the study of women and men of African descent in Oaxaca. This chapter also includes a discussion of sources and methodology, as well as the relevant scholarly literature on Oaxaca and the African Diaspora.

Chapter 2 examines patterns of interregional slave traffic to Antequera from 1680 to 1710. By focusing on the irregular slave trading period, this systematic study exposes the volume, routes, and origins of slave arrivals to Oaxaca. I contend that African-born and American-born slaves arrived from locations as far as West Africa, West Central Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean, and from cities in the Americas such as Mexico City, Puebla, Santiago de Guatemala, and Lima. Hence, enslaved people in Antequera were a diverse population of creole and bozal slaves who hailed from multiple locations in the Atlantic World. I also argue that although the transatlantic slave trade to New Spain declined after 1640, internal and inter-colonial trading networks continued to meet the labor demands of Spanish elites in the colony. This influx of enslaved people to Antequera also reveals that despite the predominance of indigenous labor systems in the seventeenth century, Spanish elites still relied on African slave labor in the Valley of Oaxaca.

In Chapter 3, I investigate slave life in Antequera and its surrounding regions. I examine the lived experiences of enslaved women and men by considering the type of labor that they performed in both urban and rural settings. This chapter also juxtaposes the treatment of enslaved people with examples of men and women who contested slaveholders and the social order, and they even found freedoms outside of Spanish colonial rule. In the same vein, I analyze

the subjectivities of enslaved people as they fought for legal freedom, fled plantations in Oaxaca, and challenged slaveholders in the Spanish colonial courts. Thus, this chapter reveals the interplay between enslaved people and slaveholders and the Spanish colonial state.

Chapter 4 addresses the public and private lives of free coloreds in the city of Antequera. This chapter assesses the city's changing social hierarchy between 1660 and 1792, as well as racial classifications and factors that determined a person's social status during this period. I argue that the vast majority of free coloreds who belonged to the lower social classes were not concerned with elite constructions of race. The rights and privileges tied to certain racial classifications certainly shaped the lives of free coloreds, but Spanish colonial law did not affect how free coloreds interacted with ethnic others. Upwardly mobile *castas* were an exception to this trend. Those near the top of the social hierarchy used marriage and occupation to negotiate or secure their social status in Antequera's racial hierarchy. I also argue that regardless of social status, free coloreds contested elite expectations of race and they used the judicial system to defend their rights. Based on their understanding of colonial categories, these men and women created and exercised their own meaning of casta. Finally, this chapter analyzes the occupations of free coloreds to reveal that race was still a critical factor that determined social status in late eighteenth-century Antequera.

Chapter 5 summarizes my research findings and discusses the contribution of this study to the broader scholarly literature. Hence, it shows that my dissertation helps improve our understanding of Antequera's diverse colonial society, and it sheds light on Diaspora experiences and identities in colonial Oaxaca. This conclusion also considers important research questions and topics that remain unanswered in studies on the African Diaspora in Latin America.

CHAPTER 2

Slave Trading in Antequera: Complex Patterns of Interregional Slave Traffic in New Spain, 1680-1710

As a young *bozal* slave, Antonio Martínez's journey to Antequera in 1703 took him from Mozambique, Africa, through the Indian Ocean trade to Manila, Philippines, and onward to a port in Acapulco, New Spain. In contrast, Miguel de la Flor was a creole slave with an Angolan mother and a father from Galicia, Spain. As enslaved people, Antonio and Miguel's journeys and experiences differed vastly, but as a creole *mulato,* Miguel interacted with merchants and ecclesiastical officials in a manner that redefined the meaning of enslavement in Antequera. Antonio and Miguel are just two examples of the many slave imports whose lives illustrate the complexity of the slave trade to Antequera and its surrounding regions. Creole and bozal slaves in Antequera arrived from various locations, including East Africa, West Africa, West Central Africa, Mesoamerica, the Caribbean, and Europe.[1] Antonio's arrival to Oaxaca also suggests that the demand for slave labor continued in Antequera during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, despite a large and diverse population of indigenous peoples surrounding the city and prevailing Spanish colonial labor systems. Thus, colonial changes, such as a declining native population and slow but steady economic growth in the region, led to a gradual increase in slave importation to the Valley of Oaxaca. While some imports, such as Antonio Martínez, were African-born, the vast majority of slaves in Antequera were born in the Americas, like Miguel de la Flor. Moreover, creole slaves in Antequera arrived from several cities in Mesoamerica and were often the black or mulato descendants of African-born slaves.

[1] *Bozal* slaves refer to those born in Africa, while those born in the Americas are labeled as *criollo* or creole in the historical record.

This chapter reassesses the volume, routes, and origins of slave arrivals to Antequera between 1680 and 1710. It suggests that interregional and inter-colonial trades of black and mulato slaves continued alongside the importation of African-born slaves via transatlantic routes, but in greater numbers and with more variation than previously known.

As a provincial capital in southern New Spain, Antequera's slave population represents the local effects of broader imperial changes in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Antequera was established in 1529 as an administrative and commercial center whose trade routes connected Veracruz, Mexico City, and Puebla with points further south, such as Chiapas, Guatemala, Peru, and the Pacific Coast.[2] Whereas the geographic position of Antequera made it a nexus for interregional trade, it was still relatively distant from key ports in Veracruz and Acapulco.[3] During the early colonial period, as Antequera's economy and the population continued to grow, free and enslaved people of African descent represented about a quarter of the city's overall population of approximately 6,000 inhabitants.[4] Changes in the city's economy and population increased the need for slave labor in Oaxaca's sugar mills, haciendas, shops of artisans, and in the homes of Antequera's elite.

---

[2] John Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), 53.

[3] See Seijas and Sierra, "The Persistence of the Slave Market in Seventeenth-Century Central Mexico." Puebla was a major hub for overland slave trafficking in New Spain in the early colonial period. Thousands of enslaved Africans were transported directly to Puebla following their arrival at the port in Veracruz.

[4] José Antonio Gay, *Historia de Oaxaca* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrua, 1982), vol. I, t. 2, 220, 221, 354, 356; Chance, 73. Chance estimated that Antequera's overall populace included 3,000 inhabitants in 1660, but the nineteenth-century historian, José Antonio Gay, found that the population had doubled to 6,000 inhabitants by 1699.

The scholarly literature on the African diaspora in Spanish America has examined the slave trade and the interplay between empires and colonial subjects.[5] Historians continue to research the subjectivities and agency of slaves living under Spanish colonialism.[6] These studies have investigated the slave trade and the institution of slavery in either urban centers, such as Antequera, or within the context of the plantation complex. There is, however, an emergent body of studies that seeks to produce a substantial, full-scale re-evaluation of the size and implications of the slave trade within New Spain, as internal economies were central for the overall Mexican economy.[7] Tatiana Seijas and Pablo Sierra's analysis of Central Mexico demonstrates that while slave traffic to New Spain diminished after 1640, scholars have underestimated the number of African slave arrivals in the second half of the seventeenth century.[8] Likewise, few scholars have considered the subsequent rise in creole, or American-born, slave traffic during this period.[9] In other words, any comprehensive measure of the slave trade to New Spain must consider the

---

[5] For scholarship on slavery in Spanish America, see Colin Palmer, *Slaves of the White God, Blacks in Mexico 1570-1650* (Cambridge, 1976); Frederick Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford, 1974); Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de Mexico* (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1972); Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat, "Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America," *American Historical Review* 120.2 (2015); Pablo Sierra, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico: Puebla de los Ángeles, 1531-1706* (Cambridge, 2018); Maira Cristina Córdova Aguilar, *Población de origen Africano en Oaxaca Colonial* (Secretaría de Culturas y Artes de Oaxaca, 2012).

[6] For literature on the subjectivities and agency of slaves, see Jane Landers, "African Ethnicity" *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives* (New Mexico, 2006); Kris Lane, *Quito 1599: City and Colony in Transition* (New Mexico, 2002); Paul Lokken, "From the 'Kingdoms of Angola' to Santiago de Guatemala," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 93.2 (2013): 171-203; Catherine Komisaruk, *Labor and Love in Guatemala* (Stanford, 2013); Rachel O'Toole, *Bound Lives* (Pittsburgh, 2012); Herman Bennett, *Colonial Blackness* (Indiana, 2009) and *Africans in Colonial Mexico* (Indiana, 2003); Dana Velasco-Murillo and Pablo M. Sierra, "Mine Workers and Weavers," *City Indians in Spain's American Empire* (Sussex, 2012).

[7] See Seijas and Sierra, "The Persistence of the Slave Market in Seventeenth-Century Central Mexico" and Proctor, "African Diasporic Ethnicity in Mexico City to 1650."

[8] Tatiana Seijas and Pablo Sierra, "The Persistence of the Slave Market in Seventeenth-Century Central Mexico," *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 2 (2016): 308.

[9] Ibid.

interregional extensions of the transatlantic and inter-colonial slave trade that persisted after the separation of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in 1640.

Antequera's size, location, economy, and diverse population created a complex, multi-ethnic dynamic that was distinct from other areas in New Spain. While Antequera's administration and organization mirrored that of other Spanish colonial cities, its size, population, and location near trunk lines of trade create a unique setting for examining slavery in Spanish America. The social and economic landscape of Antequera was also different from other regions in the colony. Like Mexico City and Puebla, Antequera was surrounded by a number of different indigenous groups, but the city experienced little economic growth in the early colonial period because Antequera did not produce wealth comparable to the silver-producing regions, textile mills of Puebla, or sugar plantations in Veracruz.

I analyze notarial records from Antequera to understand the nature of the slave trade to Oaxaca.[10] These sources consist primarily of bills of sale, wills, and payment obligations processed in the city between 1680 and 1710, when slave sales were abundant in this region. The notarial records list slaves' names, age, *calidad,* origin, and value; thus, the documents provide a nearly comprehensive view of the slave population in Antequera. Through my analysis of these materials, I suggest that the interregional and inter-colonial slave traffic supplied more captives to the city than the transatlantic slave trade. This comparatively lower total of slave imports from Africa was mainly a consequence of imperial changes in the mid-seventeenth century. Nevertheless, the forced migration of slaves to Oaxaca and their experiences in this colonial setting demonstrates that Antequera was indeed part of the very significant interregional movements that shaped the African diaspora in colonial Spanish America.

[10] "Oaxaca" refers to the areas surrounding Antequera in the Valley of Oaxaca.

While the transatlantic slave trade to New Spain peaked during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Antequera's overall population and commerce had limited growth during that time, suggesting that this region had little involvement in the slave trade before the 1650s.[11] According to John Chance, little is known about the commercial activity and early settlement in the region, but to be certain, Spanish settlers sought to take advantage of the abundance of Indian labor in the Valley of Oaxaca, and they were intrigued by the prospects of gold mining. As early as November 1521, Hernán Cortés's grandson, Fernando, commissioned the conquest of Oaxaca to explore the Pacific coast. Following Antequera's first founding in 1526, only 50 Spanish families lived in the city, surrounded by an overwhelming Indian majority.[12] The city's final founding in 1529 ultimately strengthened Fernando Cortés's waning power because the Real Audiencia realized the potential of the Valley of Oaxaca to serve as a commercial bridge between Mexico City and Guatemala. As a result, and to stimulate more interest in Antequera, the Audiencia announced that it would require all encomenderos with holdings in Oaxaca to reside in Antequera or risk losing their encomiendas.[13] By the end of that year, Antequera resembled other Spanish colonial cities, with a small core of Spaniards dominating a grid-like pattern of streets, surrounded by large and diverse Indian settlements. In the 1530s and 1540s, road building and some gold mining prevailed, but Spaniards generally

[11] See Gay, vol. II, 24-163. The demographic collapse of the Valley's indigenous population indeed occurred during this period. However, Antequera's overall population estimates are inconsistent in the early colonial period because there are limited quantitative records of the city's population in this period. José Antonio Gay argues that the city's population fluctuated between 500 and 600 residents between 1550 and the 1600s. Even with the arrival of the first few generations of immigrants to the Valley of Oaxaca, there was still limited commercial activity in the region.

[12] Chance, 30-31.

[13] Ibid., 32.

turned to Indian labor, and thus African slaves represented a small percentage of the overall labor force in the Valley of Oaxaca. By the mid-1540s, the encomendero elite continued to control mercantile activity in Antequera. For instance, a few wealthy Spaniards owned *estancias* and sugar mills in the city's environs, but these were often small-scale operations oriented to sell sugar and other agricultural products in the colony and involved few slaves.[14]

During the early colonial period, Spanish merchants began to capitalize on silver mining in the region, but there was little need for slaves because Spaniards continued to rely heavily on Indian labor.[15] An increase in the importation of enslaved Africans to the Valley of Oaxaca, however, corresponded with the growth of the Spanish population in the region. Chance reports the presence of 150 slaves, 30 free mulatos, and 350 Spanish *vecinos* in Antequera by 1569.[16] More specifically, most slaves purchased and sold in Antequera between the 1580s and 1640s were black, and either bozal or creole. Merchants in this region purchased more enslaved men than women during this period, indicating that these people arrived from internal slave trades that were somewhat disconnected from direct African arrivals in Veracruz. Still, Spanish merchants and Indian *caciques* in the Mixteca preferred African-born slaves over creoles, which draws a direct correlation with the transatlantic slave trade.[17] These bozal slaves were imported

[14] William Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 117; Chance, 56. With the exception of landholdings in the Marquesado, most land use was meant for grazing cattle and producing agricultural products for local consumption. There was little economic and capitalistic activity in Antequera and its environs prior to the 1550s.

[15] In the early colonial period, Spaniards relied heavily on the *encomienda* and *repartimiento* labor systems in the Valley of Oaxaca.

[16] Chance, 52-53.

[17] This finding reveals the complexity of slave traffic to this region. Valley residents' preference of bozal slaves suggests that a considerable number of captives arrived directly from West Central Africa through Veracruzan ports, and onward to the Valley of Oaxaca.

from Congo, Angola, and even Cairo.[18] Furthermore, these African-born slaves often arrived from Puebla, which demonstrates Puebla's continued participation in the interregional slave trade during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Creole slaves were often born in Antequera, or they arrived from nearby *cabeceras* such as Yanhuitlán and Teposcolula.[19] In brief, Spanish merchants imported limited numbers of slaves from both nearby and distant regions in the early colonial period.

Despite the city's fluctuating economy and population, Antequera was the third largest city in New Spain. The city's economy, population, and geographic size expanded during the first half of the seventeenth century. The city's overall populace tripled as the native population began to recover slightly and the *casta* group grew with each generation.[20] Antequera's overall population included 2,000 inhabitants in 1626 and increased by 1,000 in just seventeen years.

---

[18] Archivo Histórico Judicial de Oaxaca (AHJO), Protocolos, leg. 1, exp. 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15. See AHJO for examples of slave sales and manumission records processed in Antequera's neighboring cabeceras of Teposcolula and Yanhuitlán. I rely on these records because nearly all sources in Oaxaca City's notarial archive dated prior to the 1680s were burned in an archival fire in 2006. This sample of 21 slave sales reveals that greater numbers of enslaved men were purchased in comparison to enslaved women. These Congolese, Angolan, and Mandinga individuals were most likely earlier arrivals in Veracruz, sold to merchants in Mexico City and Puebla, and were later resold to merchants in Antequera in the 1590s and early 1600s. In the mid-sixteenth century, several domestic slaves were also escorted to Antequera with travel licenses from Cádiz (AGI, Indiferente 1963, L.9, F. 62; Indiferente 422, L.16, F.73, L.22, F.437R, L.16, F.104V-105R; Indiferente 1952, L.3, F.9). This was potentially the case with individuals like Sulinam, alias Juan Fantoni and his wife Aiza, who were owned by a resident of Cádiz who was living in Teposcolula in 1615. Sulinam and Aiza were labeled as "de nación Jurcona del Gran Cairo" and had been purchased from the Duke of Florence at an earlier time (AHJO, Protocolos, leg. 1, exp. 10.11). The final makeup of this small sample includes the enslaved who were born in the Valley of Oaxaca and sold in Teposcolula, Antequera, and Yanhuitlán, suggesting that reproduction was also a means of increasing the enslaved population in this region.

[19] See AHJO, Protocolos, bills of sales processed between 1580 and 1650. I rely primarily on records from the AHNO for its abundance of slave sales during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but the AHJO has some notarial records for early colonial Antequera.

[20] Chance, 126. The city's social structure became more clearly defined to include the commonly used colonial categories of *español, indio, negro, mestizo,* and *mulato* and the less commonly used terms of *castizo, morisco, lobo, coyote,* and *chino.*

The city's population reached 6,000 inhabitants by the very end of the seventeenth century.[21] This moderate growth also shaped the region's commerce and trade. The city's economy expanded as Spaniards acquired more land for commercial agriculture and livestock-raising and especially because of the increase in silver mining and the cochineal trade.[22] At the same time, Antequera remained a way-station for the transport of valuable goods such as Guatemalan indigo and cacao on route to Mexico City and Veracruz, which implies that enslaved men and women arrived in Antequera along with these Guatemalan products.[23]

These social and economic changes are also demonstrated in the writings of religious and secular officials of the time. In his travels through New Spain and Guatemala between 1600 and 1626, the British friar, Thomas Gage, observed the city's expansion and demographic changes. Gage described Antequera and the broader Valley of Oaxaca:

> …We came to the city of Guaxaca, which is a Bishop's Seat, though not very big, yet fair and beautiful city to behold…it may consist at the most of two thousand inhabitants…The Valley is full of sheep and other cattle, which yield much wool to the clothiers of the city of Angels, store of hides to the merchants of Spain, and great provision of flesh to the city of Guaxaca...[24]

Gage's description of Oaxaca in 1626 reflects many of the changes that took place in Antequera and its surrounding regions: the population of Antequera was growing steadily, and agriculture and cattle-raising still dominated commercial activity in the Valley of Oaxaca. Here, Gage

---

[21] Lolita Brockington, *The Leverage of Labor: Managing the Cortés Haciendas in Tehuantepec, 1588-1688* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989), 14.

[22] *Grana cochinilla* or cochineal was a valuable red dye that indigenous peasants produced in cactus groves in Oaxaca. Next to silver, cochineal was the most valuable commodity exported from New Spain. This product was consumed widely in Europe; its production boosted the region's economy and attracted a diverse workforce to Antequera and the Valley of Oaxaca.

[23] Chance, 111.

[24] Thomas Gage, *The English-American: A New Survey of the West Indies, 1648* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1928), 190-191.

indicated the population size and architectural and natural beauty of Oaxaca. To this end, Gage's attention to sheep and cattle are also indicators of expanding commercial activity in agriculture, which supplied the demands of the flourishing textile industry in Puebla de los Ángeles. Moreover, this agricultural commerce sustained the needs of Spanish elites in Antequera and its environs.

As the population of the city and its surrounding areas grew steadily, the enslaved and free populations of African descent people also increased in the early seventeenth century. This moderate population growth is due to both recent African arrivals and a growing free mulato population. For instance, a slave ship arrived in Veracruz in 1664 with 266 captives, of which 38 men and women were sold directly to merchants in Antequera.[25] Likewise, marriage and baptismal registers involving the marriage and births of free coloreds indicate a rise in the free colored population and suggest that free mulatos were indeed a part of the social fabric of this society during this period.[26] Thomas Gage also reported on the appearance and role of enslaved mulatos in Oaxacan society:

> Both men and women are excessive in their apparel…nay a Blackmore or Tauny young maid and slave will make hard shift but will be in fashion with her Neckchain and Bracelets of Pearl and her Ear-bobs of some considerable Jewels. The attire this baser sort of people of Blackmores and Mulatta's (which are mix-nature, of Spaniards and Blackmores) is light, and their carriage so enticing that many Spaniards even of the better sort…disdain their Wives for them. Their clothing is a Petticoat, of Silk or Cloth…Their Wastcoats made…of Holland fine China linenn, wrought some with coloured silks…Their shoos are high and of many the outside whereof of the profaner sort are plated a lift of silver, which is fastened with small nails of silver heads. Most of these are or have been slaves, [though] love have set them loose at liberty…And there are so many of this kind

[25] Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Veracruz, Escribanía 292A, leg. 2, fs. 7-17v.

[26] See Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Inquisición, vol. 478, exp. 18; vol. 455, exp. 47; vol. 316, exp. 26; vol. 329, exp. 13; vol. 474, exp. 25; Matrimonios, vol. 137, exp. 9.

> both men and women grown to a height of pride and vanity, that many times the Spaniards have feared they would rise up and [mutiny] against them.[27]

Again, Gage's observations illustrate not only the presence of enslaved women and men in Antequera, but he also alludes to tensions between Spaniards and slaves because the latter contested the boundaries of social status through their attire, jewelry, and behavior. I will discuss the agency of free and enslaved African descent people in the following chapters, but Gage's observations raise several important points about seventeenth-century Antequera. First, his frequent references to silver, pearls, and valuable textiles such as silk and linen highlight Antequera's commercial connections with other cities in New Spain and Asia. Second, the fact that enslaved people wore this valuable clothing and rode in lavish carriages suggests that either Spanish elites in Antequera used these urban slaves as status symbols or, as indicated by Gage's last sentence, that enslaved men and women employed various means to resist the dominance of Spanish elites.

As Gage suggests, Oaxaca was linked to major cities in the center of the colony, and the exchange of goods such as textiles, silver, and cochineal collectively contributed to economic growth in Antequera and its hinterlands. These commercial ties between Oaxaca and other Spanish colonial cities also included internal and interregional slave traffic in Oaxaca in the first half of the seventeenth century. As the commercial hub of the Mixteca in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Teposcolula acquired some creole and bozal slaves from within Oaxaca, as well as Puebla, Guatemala, and Spain. Based on slave sales processed between 1610 and 1664, Spanish merchants in Teposcolula purchased a relatively equal number of enslaved men and women from Puebla, the Mixteca, and Antequera. Secondary to these regions are slaves who

[27] Gage, 124.

arrived from the Kingdom of Castile, most likely as personal servants who belonged to the wealthiest Spanish families in the Mixteca. More than half of these enslaved people were indeed bozal slaves from Angola, Congo, and Cairo, which suggests that Oaxaca's role in the transatlantic and interregional slave traffic increased slightly during the early-to-mid seventeenth century.[28]

By the 1680s, African slave imports to New Spain were already in drastic decline, while the free and enslaved creole population increased steadily in many urban centers.[29] This shift in the slave trade and growth of the colony's African-descent population was due largely to the separation of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns, which prevented Portuguese merchants from operating in New Spain and transporting slaves in Portuguese ships to the colony. This imperial shift, however, does not explain the slow trickle of African slaves to the colony between 1680 and the 1730s. Instead, a series of *asientos* facilitated Spain's slow yet continuous participation in the slave trade. More specifically, asientos of the late seventeenth century responded to the demand for African slave labor in New Spain by issuing licenses for slave arrivals in the colony in the last years of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[30]

In some ways, the slave trade to Antequera reflected the African diaspora in other slave societies in Spanish America. Bozal slaves were purchased at ports in West and West Central Africa and shipped across the Atlantic to ports in Cádiz, the Caribbean, or Veracruz. African

[28] AHJO, Protocolos, leg. 1, exp. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

[29] General population growth in New Spain's larger cities also occurred because of an increase in the casta population and gradual recovery of the indigenous population beginning in the mid-seventeenth century.

[30] Ana María Rodríguez Blázquez, "Penetración portuguesa en América a través del asiento firmado por la Real Compañia de Guinea en 1696." *Temas americanistas,* no. 4 (1984): 50-51.

slaves often arrived from unspecified regions in West Africa, leaving much doubt about their origins or ethnicities.[31] Still, captives in Antequera who arrived from West African ports were labeled as "Biafara" in the historical record. And individuals marked as "Congo" and "Angola" embarked at the port of Luanda or other regions in West Central Africa. After transport across the Atlantic, factors at Spanish American ports often resold African captives; these recent arrivals were then transported to local sugar mills in Veracruz or to urban centers such as Mexico City, Puebla, and Antequera. Bills of sale include information about prior owners of slaves, revealing how they moved within and throughout New Spain.

Asientos made up only one part of the transatlantic slave trade to Oaxaca. The Spanish crown negotiated these contracts with individuals or private slaving companies and specified the number of potential slave imports to a colony over a specified period of time.[32] *Asentistas* sold licenses and dispatched ships from Lisbon, Seville, and Madrid to improve efficiency and eliminate fraud and contraband. Asentistas were also expected to pay the Spanish crown an annual sum, and during the union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns, asentistas issued most contracts to Portuguese slave traders. Asentistas established factors throughout the Atlantic in Seville, West Africa, and in Spanish American ports. As an extension of asentistas' control and power over the slave trade, factors presented accounting logs to the Council of Indies on legal and contraband slave arrivals. They also inspected ships and collected taxes. And they often committed fraud.[33] Whereas the success of the asiento system varied, the activities of asentistas

[31] With limited shipping records for the port of Veracruz after 1650, historians of slavery in New Spain are often only able to trace the origins of African captives to their point of embarkation in Congo or Angola.

[32] Linda Newson and Susie Minchin, *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish South America in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 18.

[33] Ibid., 21.

and factors indicate that Spaniards were still involved in the trade after the mid-seventeenth century.

Slave traffic to Oaxaca in the 1680s involved many different participants and practices for importing African-born and creole slaves to this region. Between the 1680s and 1690s, Spanish merchants and slave traders continued to control the traffic of slaves to this region.[34] Domingo Terán de los Ríos, the *factor diputado del consulado de Sevilla*, worked closely with Juan Martín Camuñas to bring in at least 60 African captives from a port in Congo to Antequera.[35] A Veracruzan factor named Juan de la Carra sold Congolese slaves to Oaxacan merchants, hacienda owners, and ecclesiastical officials.[36] Likewise, the factors Francisco de Mora, Juan Ruiz de Madrid, and Manuel Luis de Fonseca sold Angolan slaves to Antequera's elite at the end of the seventeenth century.[37] The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database provides a few examples of the irregular and contraband slave traffic to the colony; however, none of its listed voyages can be linked directly to the ones above.[38] Nonetheless, the continuous presence

[34] Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica y el comercio de esclavos* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2014), 116-118. The Portuguese were no longer in control of slave traffic to New Spain after 1640, but some Portuguese representatives did facilitate the trade in Veracruz in the first half of the seventeenth century. The Portuguese factors and *encomenderos*, Francisco López, Antonio Váez de Acevedo, Francisco Méndez, and Francisco Texoso, for example, promoted the slave trade from the port of Veracruz to merchants and traders in Mexico City. Few factors and slave traders appear in early seventeenth-century Oaxacan records, thus it is difficult to determine whether the Portuguese dominated interregional slave traffic to Antequera.

[35] See Archivo Histórico de Notarías del Estado de Oaxaca (AHNO), Protocolos Notariales (PN), Francisco de Quero, vol. 417, various slave sales processed in 1681-1682.

[36] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 144, ff. 341; vol. 145, ff. 101; vol. 146, ff. 458; vol. 147, fs. 334, 338, 496 are a few examples of transactions that Juan de la Carra completed with residents in Antequera.

[37] See AHNO, PN, Francisco de Quero, vol. 425, various slave sales processed in 1699-1700.

[38] Johannes Potsma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade 1600-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 41-42. See Delgado Ribas, "The Slave Trade in the Spanish Empire: The Shift from Periphery to Center"; Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Slave Trade*. The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database lists four voyages completed under Juan Barosso del Pozo between 1679 and 1682,

of these factors demonstrates the ongoing participation of Spaniards in the transatlantic slave trade.

By the early eighteenth century, however, a shift occurred in the slave trade to New Spain. Portuguese traders of the Company of Guinea re-entered the slave market and British participation in the slave trade to New Spain began, as well. The Portuguese asiento administrators and factors of the Company of Guinea, Damian Pereira de Araujo and Lucas de Acosta were based in Veracruz to monitor slave arrivals and sales to merchants in other areas of the colony. These factors sold several bozal slaves to merchants in Oaxaca.[39] By the 1720s, Juan de las Puentes of the South Sea Company, and Fabrique Bastie and Guillermo Leo of the royal asiento of Great Britain also sold a number of slaves to Antequera's elites.[40] Thus, control of the slave trade shifted from the Portuguese to the British and French during the early eighteenth century.[41] These changes in the trade occurred throughout Spanish American slave markets. Historians Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat note that between 1641 and 1789 Spanish vessels brought 23,500 African slaves to Spanish America, whereas the British imported

---

and most of these landed in either Cartagena or Caracas. The *SS Trinidade e São Antonio*, which traveled under Portuguese control in 1681, arrived from an unspecified African port; 153 African captives disembarked at an unknown location. It is possible that the 60 Congolese slaves arrived on this ship. At the same time, scholars have established that the Cádiz traders, Juan Barroso del Pozo and Nicolás Porcio, hardly controlled the trade because it was dominated by the Royal African Company and the West India Company in the early 1680s. In short, it is likely that the 60 Congolese slaves arrived from trading posts in Barbados, Jamaica, or Curaçao.

[39] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vols. 153-163. See the bills of sale processed by Diego Benaias in 1700-1711.

[40] See AHNO, PN, Joseph de Arauxo and Joseph Manuel Albarez de Aragon, bills of sale processed between 1713 and 1738.

[41] French merchants were also involved in the slave trade in Veracruz and, in general, in commerce in other cities in New Spain, including Antequera.

over 64,000 bozal slaves to this region.[42] Therefore, after the 1640s, Spanish merchants purchased bozal slaves from various ports that were controlled by Dutch, Portuguese, and British traders.

The delivery of 53 slaves to Antequera in February 1682 reveals the complexity and irregular nature of interregional slave traffic between the 1680s and early 1700s. On January 30, 1681, Juan Martín Camuñas purchased 53 African-born slaves in Veracruz with the intent that he and Juan Ruiz de la Madrid would re-sell the African captives in Oaxaca. Camuñas facilitated the sale of these slaves on behalf of Juan Barroso del Pozo, a resident of Cádiz, holder of an asiento, and the owner of the 53 captives.[43] This *armazón de esclavos* included 41 men and nine women of various ages, and another two unhealthy slaves, one who was in critical condition.[44] Camuñas most likely started the resale of the enslaved men and women in Antequera, because in the first three months of 1682 Camuñas sold nine slaves to various residents in the city. The buyers of these nine slaves included religious clerics and the wives or widowers of elite Spanish merchants and colonial officials. For instance, Joseph de Henestrosa, the *corregidor* of Antequera, purchased two slaves; Doña Josepha Coronal bought one female slave for 410 pesos.[45] In February 1682, Juan Ruiz de la Madrid took over selling the remaining enslaved Africans. And by April and May of that year, Madrid concentrated on selling several slaves to *tratantes*, landowners in Puebla and nearby Teposcolula, and sugar plantation owners. Madrid's

[42] Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat, "Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 2 (2015): 443.

[43] Josep Delgado Ribas, "The Slave Trade in the Spanish Empire (1501-1808): The Shift from Periphery to Center." in *Slavery and Antislavery in Spain's Atlantic Empire*, ed. Josep M. Fradera and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 25.

[44] AHNO, PN, Francisco de Quero, vol. 417, fs. 18v-20v.

[45] Ibid.

decision to target property owners in nearby and distant cities and cabeceras suggests that he probably struggled to quickly sell the remaining slaves in Antequera. At the same time, his actions demonstrate that while Spanish elites occupied domestic slaves in the city, there was a greater demand for plantation labor on the outskirts of Antequera. This example shows that while the transport of 53 slaves to Antequera might suggest a consistent trade between Veracruz and Oaxaca, slave traffic to this region was complex and irregular, and indeed this example reveals the importance of the slave population in Antequera and its environs.

Members of the Oaxacan elite and Spanish colonial officials purchased most of the 53 African captives. Pedro de Guendulain purchased fourteen slaves, and Rodrigo Ortiz de la Cerda bought seven of the 53 enslaved Africans in May 1682. At the time, Guendulain held various titles in the Office of the Holy Inquisition. He also owned large estates throughout the Valley of Oaxaca, including a hacienda east of Antequera, a sugar plantation southeast of the city of Nejapa, and another plantation in Teotitlán del Camino, which was located at the northern edge of Oaxaca. Pedro's son, Juan de Guendulain, also employed slaves as domestic servants and as plantation labor in the Guendulain family's various haciendas.[46] Similarly, Ortiz owned a sugar plantation in Nejapa, and both Guendulain and Ortiz purchased the most enslaved people in this sample of slave sales. Along with four other buyers of slaves, Guendulain and Ortiz purchased a total of 24 of the 53 slaves in Zimatlán, a townsite with a strong Dominican presence and that was situated in the southern edge of the Valley of Oaxaca.[47]

---

[46] AHNO, PN, Francisco de Quero, vol. 417, ff. 84; Diego Benaias, vol. 145, ff. 435; vol. 148, ff. 166, 504; vol. 149, ff. 188; vol. 150, ff. 100v; Joseph Manuel Albarez de Aragon, vol. 42, ff. 373v; vol. 44, ff. 423v; Joseph de Arauxo, vol. 121, ff. 272; Luis de Ybarra, vol. 264, ff. 91; vol. 266, ff. 114v, 134.

[47] AHNO, PN, Francisco de Quero, vol. 417, ff. 3-128; vol. 418, ff. 2-39. See Taylor, 26. The Dominicans facilitated Spanish administration and evangelism in the Valley. Zimatlán was the most ambitious of their congregations because they founded a town in previously unoccupied territory. Santo Domingo, for instance, acquired land in the southern arm of the Valley, including sites in Zimatlán during the

Notarial records from Antequera show that local merchants sold slaves through bills of sale, powers of attorney, wills, and public auction. The types of buyers suggest the kind of labor that creole and bozal slaves provided in Oaxaca. Namely, Oaxacan buyers of slaves included secular and ecclesiastical officials, merchants, professionals, *hacendados*, and women.[48] Whereas secular and ecclesiastical officials often assigned slaves to manual labor projects including building the city's cathedral, merchants primarily deployed slaves in nearby haciendas and sugar mills.[49] Eighteenth-century apprentice contracts also suggest that Oaxacan professionals employed slaves in their guilds as skilled laborers.[50] In addition to these different occupations, the wills and testaments of married and widower women indicate that creole and bozal slaves carried out basic domestic tasks as personal servants, cooks, and wet nurses.[51]

By far, members of the religious orders purchased and owned the greatest number of enslaved men, women, and children in the Valley of Oaxaca. Religious officials included priests, bishops, archdeacons, and officers of the Inquisition, among many others, and they comprised fifty percent of all buyers of slaves. Some members of the clergy arrived in Antequera from nearby towns to purchase slaves, whereas the vast majority lived in Antequera and used slaves in

---

seventeenth century. It is possible that some slaves in the region worked at the silver and copper mines in nearby Chichicapa.

[48] See AHNO, PN, bills of sale processed between 1680 and 1730. Hacienda owners often held multiple secular and religious colonial positions and they engaged in commercial activities, as well.

[49] Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Oaxaca (AHAO), *Libro de la fábrica de la catedral de Oaxaca, 1584-1604*, 52r-52v. Enslaved people helped indigenous laborers build the city's cathedral during the first phase of construction in the mid-sixteenth century.

[50] AHNO, PN, Francisco de Quero, vol. 437, fs. 149 and 309; vol. 419, ff. 105.

[51] Evidence from listings in the 1792 Antequera census show that domestic slaves were used as personal servants, cooks and wet nurses. Also see Velázquez, *Mujeres de origen africano en la capital novohispana.*

their nearby sugar plantations and haciendas. Religious orders such as the Dominicans and Franciscans maintained a strong presence in the region during the early colonial period. The Church grew steadily during the late sixteenth century as it acquired lands in the Valley of Oaxaca through donations, *capellanías,* and gifts.[52] The religious orders primarily used their properties for cattle-raising, and to a lesser degree, for the production of sugar.[53] For instance, the Jesuit monastery and college owned a small wheat farm, several cattle ranches, a mill, and a few sugar plantations in rural areas of the Valley. They relied on slaves to work their lands and to produce sugar on their plantations. The Jesuits also owned a hacienda named Nuestra Señora del Rosario, which was located southwest of Antequera. This hacienda had approximately 55 enslaved people who were purchased or inherited in the latter half of the seventeenth century.[54]

The Dominican monastery of Santo Domingo owned the largest number of urban and rural properties in the entire region, and members of the order relied heavily on slave labor to tend to their properties. For example, Dominican *conventos* owned four cattle ranches on route to the coast in Tehuantepec, several farms, a couple of mills in the Valley of Oaxaca, and various properties in Antequera.[55] Based on my sample of slave sales, fray Juan de Saavedra purchased five enslaved men and women and sold fifteen individuals between 1680 and 1710. Likewise, the nunnery, Santa Catalina de Sena, bought and sold nine enslaved people during this period of

[52] Taylor, 168-169. Capellanías were grants to individual clerics or Church groups that helped support certain religious ceremonies.

[53] Ibid., 171.

[54] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 153, ff. 164.

[55] Taylor, 174.

study.[56] Although these conventos purchased fewer slaves than they sold, members of the religious orders undoubtedly obtained these enslaved individuals at an earlier point in the seventeenth century.

In addition to the 53 African captives who were sold in the Valley of Oaxaca, ongoing traffic of enslaved people continued during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and it was largely facilitated by wealthy Oaxacan merchants and families. Prominent Oaxacan families such as the Guendulains, Bohorquezes, and Espinas bought and sold slaves during the first half of the eighteenth century.[57] For example, between 1682 and 1710, members of the Guendulain family bought 26 slaves, whereas they only sold four slaves.[58] Likewise, men and women of the Bohorquez family purchased seven slaves between the late 1680s and 1707.[59] Widows made up one-quarter of all buyers of slaves. These women generally purchased enslaved women to perform domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and personal service. And in very rare circumstances, widows bought male slaves, who most likely worked as carriage drivers or performed manual labor on haciendas. High and low-level merchants such as muleteers frequently transported slaves to Oaxaca while carrying valuable goods from other areas in the colony to Antequera. In some cases, artisans such as locksmiths, silversmiths, and gilders purchased slaves and trained them as apprentices in their guilds; in others, wealthy merchants

[56] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 146, ff. 184; vol. 148, ff. 158; vol. 157, ff. 253. Diego Diaz Romero, vol. 200, ff. 205; vol. 204, ff. 134v; vol. 207, ff. 70.

[57] Juan de Guendulain was a royal official of the Santa Cruzada; several of his descendants were wealthy merchants in Oaxaca.

[58] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 149, ff. 188; vol. 150, ff. 100v; vol. 152, ff. 47v; vol. 153, ff. 543; vol. 156, ff. 225v; Francisco de Quero, vol. 417, ff.125.

[59] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 147, ff. 438; vol. 148, ff. 492; vol. 149, ff. 203; vol. 159, ff. 12; Diego Diaz Romero, vol. 191, ff. 105.

and religious officials contracted individuals to sell their slaves in other parts of the colony. And royal officials such as Agustín de Soto, Antonio Gaistarro and Juan de Pascua O'Brien of the Santa Cruzada also sold many slaves during the 1730s.[60] For the most part, these colonial officials sold slaves who were black or mulato creoles born in areas surrounding Antequera. Similar to the internal slave trade in other parts of New Spain, slave traffic to Oaxaca was multi-faceted, involving varying numbers of slaves and a wide range of individuals at multiple levels of local society.

Creole and bozal slaves were typically purchased and resold in as few as six months or as many as several years, and thus enslaved people in Antequera performed a variety of tasks in urban and hacienda settings over the course of their lives. For example, an adult mulato slave named Miguel de la Flor performed both unique and ordinary tasks on an everyday basis. At twenty-four years of age, Miguel had already been purchased and sold by at least three different owners in Antequera, forcing him to work in the public and domestic spheres in his childhood and young adulthood. Miguel likely worked as a domestic servant, along with his Angolan mother, in the home of Floriana de Milan, but he later worked closely with a local merchant and shopkeeper. And as an adult urban slave, Miguel sold merchandise in his slaveholder's store, and provided medical assistance for him, too. By the time Miguel reached his early twenties, he was purchased by another merchant who forced him to do mercantile and agricultural work, such as measuring and bundling cochineal for export.[61]

[60] See AHNO, PN, Joseph Manuel Albarez de Aragón, vols. 40-56; Manuel Francisco de Rueda, vols. 488-493; Joseph de Arauxo, vols. 115-120; Diego Benaias, vols. 153-164.

[61] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, vol. 4547, exp. 14.

To summarize, the slave trade to this region involved many different participants, including high and low-level Spanish merchants, religious officials, colonial authorities, and Portuguese and British slave traders. Administrators of asientos, factors, and wealthy merchants occasionally sold large numbers of slaves to Oaxacan residents; but for the most part, slave sales were smaller transactions between two independent parties. As in other slave societies, the Church was a primary purchaser of slaves in the colonial period. My study of Antequera shows that interregional slave traffic existed during an era of transatlantic slave trade and even continued after a decrease in transatlantic arrivals. This continuation of the traffic included a shift from importing African-born slaves to trading black and mulato slaves who were born in other parts of New Spain and Guatemala.

Despite the decline of the transatlantic slave trade after the 1640s, a smaller yet substantial number of African slaves continued to arrive in New Spain through the first half of the eighteenth century. Borucki, Eltis, and Wheat noted that African slaves arrived in Spanish America from various regions across the Atlantic.[62] Most bozal slaves arrived from West Central Africa, but many other slaves came from Spanish American ports such as Veracruz and Cartagena and were often conveyed to other areas of Spanish America.[63] In the case of Antequera, bozal slaves disembarked in Veracruz from ports in Congo and Angola, and likely elsewhere. Creole slaves also arrived from several points in the Americas, such as Mexico City, Puebla, Santiago de Guatemala, Veracruz, and Chiapas.

Notarial records labeled slaves as criollo or bozal and, in the case of African-born slaves, notaries also provided the labels *de nación* Congo, Mozambique, Angola, and Luanda. Through

[62] See Borucki, Eltis, and Wheat, "Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America".

[63] Borucki, Eltis, and Wheat, 437.

the mid-seventeenth century, bozal slaves were shipped to Spanish America from regions in northern Upper Guinea, Angola, and to a lesser extent, São Tomé and Lower Guinea. After the 1640s and through the end of the eighteenth century, most slaves were transported from coasts between present-day Ghana and Nigeria.[64] Of a sample of 1,038 slave sales processed in Antequera and its environs, only 570 documents labeled slaves as born in Africa or the Americas.[65] From this subsample of 570 slaves, 258 people were labeled as African-born. The overwhelming majority of the 258 African captives arrived from an unspecified region in Africa; only 110 slaves were labeled with a specific African origin or ethnicity.[66] Specifically, 48 percent of the 110 African captives arrived from Angola; 30 percent were Congolese. Fewer bozal slaves were labeled as Mandinga, Bran, Arará, and Casta Rosada.[67] (See Table 2.1) In other words, most African slaves in Antequera came from various ports in West Central Africa; the majority of bozal captives came from ports in Congo or Angola, whereas a minority hailed from Mozambique.[68] These findings show that there was a presence of African-born slaves, and some

[64] Ibid., 446.

[65] These findings are based on my analysis of 1,038 slave sales processed in Oaxaca between 1680 and 1710. In nearly all of these cases, the enslaved people arrived in Veracruz and were resold in Oaxaca. I trace their point of origin based on the location of their previous sale. In the case of African-born slaves, I rely on how notaries labeled them for ethnic ascription. My sample of 1,038 individuals includes 468 enslaved people who lack reference to any point of origin. I suspect that these 468 people were born in or around Antequera because there is no indication of a prior sale in another location.

[66] Of 258 bozal slaves in the archival record, only 110 people were labeled with a specific origin such as Congo, Angola, or Luanda.

[67] Sixteen African arrivals included smaller numbers of slaves (1-2) labeled as Bran, Mina, Casta Arara, Casta Rosada, Mandinga, and Casta Cafre.

[68] The base was West Central Africa, as this was the general pattern of traffic in the early to mid-seventeenth century. Still, there was a small minority of recent arrivals from Southeast and West Africa. It is likely that Dutch slave traffic of the late seventeenth century had little impact on Oaxaca because most of the Dutch arrivals came from Loango and Bight of Benin, which rarely appear in my sample of African arrivals. It is probable that my sample included enslaved people who disembarked from Portuguese ships in Veracruz between the 1640s and 1660s. The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database lists 15 voyages

with a specific origin, but they constituted a minority of the overall slave population in Antequera.

Table 2.1: Origin of African slave arrivals in Oaxaca, 1680-1710

Classification	Men	Women	Total
Bozal-Unspecified	104	44	148
Congo	26	8	34
Luanda	30	14	44
Angola	7	2	9
Africa—Other*	6	4	10
Casta Cofre	6	-	6
Mandinga	2	2	4
Mozambique	3	-	3
TOTAL	184	74	258

Source: AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias and Diego Diaz Romero, bills of sale.[69]

The gender distribution of Africans who arrived in Oaxaca resembles the general ratio in other Spanish American cities; African male captives outnumbered females by more than two times. The gender ratio of men to women from Congo was 3:1, whereas the ratio of Angolan captives was 2:1. Overall, Spanish elites in Antequera purchased more male slaves than women, most likely to supplement the labor force on plantations and haciendas in the city's environs. And like other regions in Spanish America, most slaves with a specified point of embarkation arrived from ports in West Central Africa. And yet, the overwhelming majority of African captives from this sample arrived from an unspecified region in Africa. These individuals were

arriving in Veracruz between 1640 and 1670. Eight of these ships arrived in Veracruz from Senegambia, while four ships came from West Central Africa. There are only three recorded arrivals between 1680 and 1710, all under Dutch and French control.

[69] The category of "Other" includes smaller numbers of slaves (1 or 2) who were labeled as Bran, Mina, Casta Arará, Casta Rosada, and Casta Cafre.

merely labeled as African-born, leaving much doubt about their point of embarkation and actual origin in Africa. Given the abundance of slave arrivals from ports in Congo and Angola, the 148 women and men listed with an unspecified origin most likely came from West Central Africa, as well. Equally important is the fact that the categories of Bran, Mina, Casta Arará, Casta Rosada, Casta Cafre, and Mozambique point to the diverse backgrounds of enslaved Africans in Antequera. Most arrived from regions in West Central Africa in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but a minority still came from West Africa and even Southeast Africa. This sub-sample of slave sales complicates our understanding of the slave population in the city and its surrounding regions, as a varied group of people who were all forced to migrate to the Valley of Oaxaca.

One example of a transaction was the sale of a bozal who arrived in Antequera through a Portuguese trading company in the early eighteenth century. Luis Berdugo Santa Cruz purchased Tereza Josepha, a 23-year-old black slave, from Martín de Borda in 1712. Borda previously purchased Tereza in Veracruz from administrators of the Portuguese Guinea Company in 1701.[70] Although the bill of sale does not specify Tereza's status as a bozal or creole slave, Tereza probably arrived from Africa, because she was highly valued at 412 pesos and purchased from the Company of Guinea in Veracruz. The sale attests to Spain's ongoing reliance on Portuguese slave traders for shipping Africans to New Spain.

The trans-Pacific slave trade to Oaxaca was smaller than its Atlantic counterpart, but it still represented another avenue for merchants to acquire African slaves—by way of the Manila Galleon. Between 1565 and 1700, over 140 ships sailed from Manila to Acapulco. The long

[70] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 164, ff. 139v. See "Dos bandos relativos al asiento de la real compañia francesa (1704)" in *Reales asientos y licencias para la introducción de eslavos negros a la América Española (1676-1789)*. This sale in Veracruz coincides with the French asiento, which began in 1701.

voyage lasted approximately six months. It was not uncommon for slaves taken in Mozambique to be shipped to Manila and then to Acapulco. In fact, Portuguese merchants relied on the Indian Ocean Trade and often traveled from port to port, stopping in Goa, Macau, and Nagasaki, before traveling across the Pacific to New Spain.[71] Once traders arrived with Asian and African slaves and valuable goods in Ciudad de los Reyes (present-day Acapulco), the enslaved were transported overland to Mexico City and other locations such as Oaxaca.

An outstanding example of how slaves arrived in Antequera via the extended trans-Pacific trade can be found in a legal case involving a slave from Mozambique. When Antonio Martínez purchased a black slave from Antonio del Pozo in Antequera in 1703, the bill of sale indicated that Francisco de Padilla Navarro, a resident of Manila, brought the slave named Antonio to a port in Ciudad de los Reyes at an earlier date. The document also notes that Antonio was from Mozambique and that he was transported via the Indian Ocean trade to Manila.[72] Antonio's long and grueling journey may represent the sheer desperation of lowly slave merchants, but it also demonstrates New Spain's integration into the transpacific slave trade.[73] And Oaxaca's growing participation in this trade is evidenced by the ongoing flow of people, goods, and money between Antequera, Acapulco, and Manila during the first quarter of the

---

[71] Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 53.

[72] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 156, ff. 455.

[73] Seijas, 74. The transpacific slave trade to Acapulco began in the 1560s and continued through the seventeenth century and beyond, bringing over 8,000 individuals to New Spain and Peru. The Manila Galleon trade resembled the transatlantic slave trade in that it functioned under the *asiento* system before it opened up to individual traders and eventually became a monopoly. Transpacific trade involved the transport of enslaved people from various locations, including the Spanish Philippines, East Africa, Portuguese India, and the Muslim sultanates of Southeast Asia. Upon arrival at the port of Acapulco, the enslaved were categorized as either blacks or *chinos* (general term for those from the Pacific), before they were resold and transported to other parts of New Spain and, especially to Mexico City.

eighteenth century. The background to this slave sale includes multiple traders and transactions involving personal debt. As the merchant who transported Antonio across the Pacific Ocean, Francisco de Padilla Navarro owed Antonio del Pozo 350 pesos for daily sustenance during his stay in Acapulco. Since Francisco was unable to repay Antonio, he traded his African slave to clear his debt so that the slave could be resold at a higher price. Although Francisco did not hold Antonio's bill of sale, Francisco assured Antonio del Pozo that he purchased the African captive from a religious cleric named Cristobal Carballo and that a bill of sale was processed before a public notary named Francisco Pullol in Manila on November 8, 1698. Since a notary was not present when Francisco gave his slave to Antonio del Pozo, Francisco had three Oaxacan witnesses sign off on the transaction on April 1, 1700.[74]

These series of transactions involving a bozal slave from Mozambique reveal the global dimensions of the slave trade to Antequera. The trans-Pacific trade between Manila and Acapulco transported slaves alongside Chinese silks and Indian cotton, porcelain, and spices. In the early colonial "China Trade," the traffic of enslaved people was secondary to the trading of valuable textiles and porcelains. Human trafficking from Asia in this period was small-scale by comparison to the transatlantic slave trade. The trade generally involved individual licenses and the sale of enslaved Africans and Asians as a form of contraband. Despite royal legislation in the 1690s prohibiting the resale of slaves who arrived in Acapulco on the Manila Galleon, enslaved Africans and Asians continued to arrive in Acapulco and were quickly resold to merchants in Mexico City, Puebla, Zacatecas, and Antequera.[75] In the case of Antonio, we see how merchants sold and traded slaves to pay off debt, and the enslaved were often used as collateral for other

[74] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 156, ff. 456.

[75] Seijas, 107-108.

contracts in Antequera; thus, slaves formed part of larger merchants' transactions that involved the commerce of goods and bills of exchange. Antonio's story also sheds light on the lived, human experiences of slavery and the slave trade. After his capture in Africa, Antonio was shipped across the Indian Ocean to Manila, where he was traded to Carballo and then traded to Padilla, and then across the Pacific Ocean to Acapulco, where he was traded to Pozo, and then traded a fourth time to Martínez in Antequera.[76] Finally, the participation of a cleric in the chain of exchange on the Manila side of the Pacific Ocean (Carballo) illustrates the Church's role in perpetuating the institution of slavery, which extended across multiple societies.

African slaves from Mozambique were not exactly common in Antequera. Most slaves arrived in Antequera from various parts of Spanish America and the Caribbean. Bills of sale, wills, and property inventories from 1680 to 1710 labeled slaves as criollos or noted the former slaveholders' residences, confirming that most slaves in Antequera were in fact born in the Americas.[77] From the subsample of 570 enslaved people, 312 individuals were identified as creoles, of which 83 creole slaves arrived from an unspecified origin. Of the 229 remaining creole slaves, only 52 people or 23 percent of the creole slave population were born in Antequera, whereas the rest of the creole population came from other areas in Mesoamerica.[78] (Table 2.2) The largest number of slaves came from Veracruz, but in many cases their

[76] Ibid., 104-106. It is likely that this African captive arrived in Acapulco under a Portuguese asiento. The transpacific slave trade was a particularly contentious issue because between 1696 and 1701 the Portuguese used various measures to strengthen their control over the slave trade across the Pacific.

[77] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias vols. 142-164, bills of sale and Diego Diaz Romero vols. 164-182, bills of sale. In many cases, bills of sale for this period did not specify bozal or creole status. Rather, the slave's calidad was stated as negro, mulato, etc. In these cases, I considered these slaves as creoles, and I only report slaves as African-born when the term "bozal" or an African ethnicity is listed.

[78] This number included enslaved people who were likely born in Antequera and sold for the first time, or adults who were resold in Antequera with a bill of sale stating that their previous owner used them for labor in Antequera.

Table 2.2: Origin of creole slave arrivals in Oaxaca, 1680-1710

Classification	Men	Women	Total
Veracruz	74	17	91
Creole-Unspecified	53	30	83
Antequera	24	28	52
Other*	15	10	25
Mexico City	6	8	14
Guatemala	9	2	11
Puebla	7	3	10
Miahuatlan	3	5	8
Huajolotitlán	4	3	7
Nejapa	3	2	5
Marquesado del Valle	3	1	4
Chiapas	1	1	2
TOTAL	202	110	312

Source: AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias and Diego Diaz Romero.[79]

background—meaning creole or bozal—is unclear, which complicates my analysis of slave arrivals from Veracruz. Likewise, the category of unspecified creoles is difficult to assess because it includes enslaved people who were labeled as creoles but were possibly born in the Valley of Oaxaca or other areas of Spanish America and the Caribbean. After those who arrived from Veracruz, and unspecified creoles, slaves purchased from residents in Mexico City, Puebla, and Santiago de Guatemala make up the largest group. This subsample of creole slaves includes fourteen people from Mexico City, eleven from Guatemala, and ten from Puebla.

Commercial networks between Antequera and other urban centers suggest degrees of regional integration within New Spain. Both high and low-level merchants, for example,

[79] The category of "Other" creole slaves includes smaller numbers of slaves who arrived from distant cities like Mérida, Guadalajara, Michoacán, Acapulco, and nearby towns such as Zimatlán, Jalapa, Tabasco, Villa Alta, Tehuantepec, Ometepeque, Ejutla, Yanhuitlán, Etla, Teposcolula, and San Hipolito Martin.

transported valuable commodities such as Guatemalan indigo, cacao, and enslaved people from Guatemala to Antequera. The Spanish elite in Oaxaca purchased many of their valuable goods from Mexico City, Puebla, and Santiago de Guatemala. Very few slaves came from nearby towns such as Teposcolula, Villa Alta, and Miahuatlan. Likewise, only a small number of slaves came from sugar plantations and haciendas in Nejapa, Marquesado del Valle, and Huajolotitlán. Still, the 25 creole arrivals from cities and cabeceras—including Mérida, Michoacán, Zimatlán, Yanhuitlán, and Tehuantepec—show that these regions were also involved in regional slave traffic.

The gender distribution of creoles in Oaxaca differed significantly from that of African-born slaves. Interestingly, creole slaves from Antequera and Mexico City had a gender ratio of 1:1, suggesting that while wealthy Spaniards in both cities relied on slave arrivals from other regions, they also contributed to the slave population by encouraging or allowing reproduction. By contrast, Puebla, which imported an abundance of Angolan slaves, had a gender ratio that was more typical of other slave societies, with twice as many men as women. The city of Veracruz, where four enslaved men were sold for every woman, represents the extremes of the transatlantic slave trade. The outlier in this data is the cabecera of Miahuatlán, in which approximately two enslaved women were sold for every male slave.

This data points to the challenges of analyzing an internal and inter-colonial slave traffic that operated simultaneously and, at times, as an extension of the transatlantic slave trade. For instance, this sample of notarial data suggests that Spaniards in Antequera imported a comparable number of bozal and creole slaves, but upon closer analysis, the majority of slaves came from an unspecified origin in the Atlantic world. From my sample of 1,038 slave sales, cases involving 468 individuals sold in Antequera did not indicate a previous bill of sale or point

of origin. Moreover, 231 men and women were labeled as creole and bozal slaves with an unspecified origin. Another limitation of this data set is that both creole and bozal slaves traveled through and were sold in other urban centers such as Veracruz, Puebla, Mexico City, and Santiago de Guatemala. Slave arrivals from these cities were often labeled as creoles, but there are also circumstances in which an Angolan slave, for instance, was transported through the Middle Passage, sold in Veracruz to a merchant in Puebla, and then resold to Spanish elites in Antequera. Therefore, many of these enslaved people were twice or even three times removed from their "point of origin."

Slave sales in Antequera reveal several important aspects about the interregional slave trade in this region. First, slave traffic to this region reflects patterns of the trade observed in larger urban centers such as Santiago de Guatemala and Puebla. By the 1680s and 1690s, slave traffic to Guatemala spilled over to Antequera, creating a trade route of both goods (such as indigo) and enslaved creoles, who may have descended from African-born slaves who arrived in New Spain earlier in the seventeenth century. These creole slaves generally were mulato and potentially maintained a different connection to their bozal counterparts and the broader African diaspora.[80] Second, Puebla's proximity to Mexico City and Veracruz might explain the diversity of slaves who arrived in Antequera from this city. On the one hand, Puebla's proximity to the port of Veracruz meant that the city imported an abundance of Angolan slaves.[81] At the same time, Puebla's closeness to Mexico City suggests that merchants in Puebla had access to a

[80] Marriage patterns among colored populations in New Spain reveal that creoles, and free coloreds in particular, used marriage as a means to distinguish themselves from other African descent populations. In other words, creole slaves were probably more accustomed to Spanish colonial life, and thus, they had a more distant connection to Africa in comparison to their bozal counterparts.

[81] See Sierra, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico: Puebla de Los Angeles, 1531-1706*.

diverse slave population of both recent African arrivals and creole slaves born in the viceregal capital. Thus, for African captives arriving in Veracruz, the slave trade route determined and defined the origins and destinations of enslaved Africans in New Spain.

The comparable number of slave arrivals from Guatemala and Puebla in Antequera suggest various strategies for acquiring slaves in Oaxaca. Slave sales reflect a network of commercial connections between Mexico City, Puebla, Guatemala, and Antequera. In 1689, for example, the Spanish admiral and resident of Antequera, Isidoro de Atondo y Antillon, hired Bricio Prato to sell a slave on his behalf. At the time, Isidoro had owned a creole *mulata prieta* named Andrea, whom he purchased just three years prior from a merchant in Mexico City. As a merchant and muleteer, Bricio Prato was involved in the interregional slave trade, and when the Spanish admiral requested his help, Bricio was on the verge of beginning yet another trip to Soconusco, most likely to collect cacao.[82] Similarly, a merchant from Puebla named Juan de Lecanduri contracted Antonio Ramírez de Aguilar to sell his slave in Antequera. Juan de Lecanduri had owned a black slave named Juan Barranco while living in Puebla for ten years, but in 1701 he issued a power of attorney to Antonio Ramírez so that he would sell Juan Barranco in Antequera.[83] These slave sales highlight the different ways in which slave holders acquired and resold their slaves: some merchants owned and used their slaves for decades, while others contracted the enslaved to be resold in different cities along ancient Mesoamerican roads that connected Mexico City, Puebla, Antequera, and Guatemala.

[82] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 146, ff. 115. Soconusco was the province on Guatemala and Mexico's Pacific Coast. The cacao boom began in Soconusco in the sixteenth century.

[83] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 156, ff. 411v.

A few slaves came to Antequera from Chiapas in the south.[84] Rodrigo de la Chica sold two married slaves in Antequera on behalf of Pedro López de Atocha in September 1689. The two black slaves, named Lucas de la Cruz and Melchora de los Reyes, were sold to Ambrocio del Real for 600 pesos. Even though the bill of sale did not specify whether Lucas and Melchora were creole or *bozal* slaves, the document stated that Rodrigo purchased the two slaves from ecclesiastical officials in Santo Domingo, in Chiapa de la Real, just two months before this transaction was processed in Antequera.[85] There are various reasons for the quick turnaround in slave sales, including transport or quality of labor, but what is certain is that Lucas and Melchora were brought to Antequera from Chiapas.

Some colonial institutions even acquired slaves through donation. On December 29, 1687, Micaela de las Fuentes, a widow and resident of Antequera,[86] donated a 55-year-old slave to the confraternity named Santísimo Sacramento de la Santa Iglesia Catedral in Antequera. The donated slave was Juan de Segura, a creole mulato whom Micaela's late husband had purchased from a merchant in Guatemala.[87] Micaela's actions suggest that merchants from Antequera who traveled to or traded goods in Guatemala must have found some benefit in purchasing enslaved people there. Thus, the slave trade from Guatemala to Antequera developed from the trade of other goods, as illustrated through these one-time, individual transactions that occurred along this

[84] Chiapas operated under the Kingdom of Guatemala during this period.

[85] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 146, fs. 408-410.

[86] The deceased spouse was named Francisco Martínez.

[87] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 144, ff. 401.

commercial route. Micaela's donation exemplifies the constant demand for slaves in Antequera and shows just one of the many ways in which the ecclesiastical community procured slaves.[88]

Micaela's practice of donating slaves suggests that she must have owned many captives. Just two weeks prior to donating Juan de Segura, Micaela donated many goods, including a four-year-old *mulata blanca*, to a thirteen-year-old orphan girl who was living in her home.[89] Like many other enslaved people, this female slave was born and raised in Micaela's home.[90] And in 1694, Micaela sold another black creole slave named Juan Francisco to a local priest. Juan Francisco, born and raised in Micaela's home, was only ten years-old at the time of the sale.[91] Micaela freed yet another black female slave in that same year. Like the other slaves, twenty-year-old Manuela was born and raised in Micaela's home; she was the daughter of another slave named Gerónimo de las Fuentes. Gerónimo purchased his daughter's freedom with the 400 pesos he earned while working on Micaela's sugar plantation.[92] At least five different individuals appear in the historical record as enslaved and freed by Micaela de las Fuentes.

Micaela's involvement in the sugar industry explains why she was able to donate several enslaved people in less than a decade.[93] Her behavior, however, suggests yet another aspect of

---

[88] It was common for Spanish elites who lacked inheritors to bequeath their property to the Church. This was one of the many ways in which this institution collected and acquired great wealth in real estate, land ownership, and enslaved people in New Spain.

[89] It was also common for Spanish elites to bequeath goods and property to personal servants, especially when elites lacked any inheritors.

[90] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 144, ff. 387.

[91] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 149, ff. 375.

[92] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 149, ff. 471.

[93] Micaela's ability to donate young and old slaves suggests that she possessed a substantial number of slaves and that she was financially stable.

slavery in Oaxaca. Whereas wealthy residents and merchants based in Antequera likely purchased creole and bozal slaves as domestic laborers, hacienda owners may have increased the slave population by allowing reproduction, as well. In several cases, residents in Antequera with haciendas and sugar mills on the outskirts of the city left wills and inventories that included at least five to ten slaves who were born on their properties.[94] Thus, the slave trade in this region included a wide variety of participants and strategies for obtaining slaves.

A few creole and bozal slaves arrived in Antequera from the Caribbean. Less than five creole slaves, including a black slave named Magdalena, arrived in Antequera from Puerto Rico through Veracruzan ports in the last decade of the seventeenth century. Two bozal slaves arrived from Cuba during the same period. One of these slaves was a Mandinga named Francisco who was purchased in Havana in June of 1692 by a traveling Oaxacan merchant. Francisco was resold in Antequera approximately six months later. These findings shed light on the scope of transatlantic, inter-colonial, and interregional slave traffic. At the macro-economic level, the transatlantic slave trade to New Spain had drastically diminished after the mid-seventeenth century. And yet, small numbers of African captives continued to arrive in the colony, potentially as a form of contraband or legally under the asientos of Juan Barroso del Pozo and Nicolas Porcio.[95] At the same time, intra-Caribbean traffic that led to disembarkation in Veracruz overlapped with a transatlantic route that conveyed creole and bozal slaves to Veracruz from the British, French, Dutch, and Spanish Caribbean. The history of the slave trade to Antequera reveals this shift, and the continued supply of creole and bozal slaves, even in the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

[94] Of the 52 creole slaves from Antequera, 18 individuals were born in the home of their slaveholder.

[95] See Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade.*

Finally, the case study of Martín Pelaez emphasizes the far-reaching commercial ties that Oaxacan merchants maintained with other areas in Spanish America. Martín was living in Antequera in the 1690s, but he was originally from Lima, Peru. His mother was also from Lima and his father was born in Seville. While Martín's family remained in Lima, Martín migrated to Antequera; his last will and testament reveals that he owned several slaves in Oaxaca. He owned a black creole slave named Agustin, another black creole slave from Guatemala, and a third black slave that he purchased in Portobelo.[96] Exemplifying the diverse slave population in Antequera, Martín possessed slaves that were born in the city and imported from locations as far south as Lima, Peru. As Martín traveled from Lima to Antequera, he purchased captives in Portobelo and Guatemala. He likely bought and sold additional slaves before writing his will, profiteering from slave trading in mainland Spanish America.

Examining the experiences of creole slaves reveals the impact of slave traffic and colonialism in New Spain. These slaves were born and often baptized in the Americas; they lived and toiled in the homes and on the haciendas of the local Spanish elite. Thus, they were born into a Spanish-dominated secular and religious world. Many of these enslaved people had come into contact with the judicial system, and thus were somewhat familiar with Spanish juridical processes.[97] Furthermore, many reports of runaway slaves who arrived in Antequera from Guatemala demonstrate that enslaved people in Antequera, as elsewhere in the Diaspora, were aware of their status as slaves and sought ways to obtain freedom by escaping the reach of local

[96] AHNO, PN, Francisco de Quero, vol. 429, ff. 29.

[97] See AHJO, Penal, leg. 38, exp. 36; leg. 16, exp. 37; leg. 23, exp. 9 for a few examples of criminal cases that included African descent people living near Antequera.

authorities in New Spain.[98] The actions of creole slaves who navigated and resisted colonial law enhances our understanding of the slave trade in this region.

By the same token, the internal traffic of American-born slaves points to the fragile stability of creole slaves, because of the peril of forced relocation. A slave born in Guatemala, for instance, inherited the social networks of protection from his or her parents; over the course of that individual's childhood and adulthood, he or she would have built other social networks of support. However, once removed and returned to the slave market, that individual's vulnerability increased, as he or she could no longer count on connections with anyone. Many of these men and women were often descendants of African-born captives who arrived around the height of the slave trade to New Spain and Guatemala, before the mid-seventeenth century. Given the constant influx of Africans, creole slaves were bound to have some interaction with their bozal counterparts, most likely during transport from one city to another, on haciendas, or in the homes of Spanish elites. For example, one might consider the context of mule trains that connected Guatemala and Oaxaca with Puebla and Mexico City. It is likely that bozal or creole slaves worked in or were transported for sale in these trains, and that they carried news and vital information that could only be communicated by colonial roads.

The fragility of forced relocation across the Atlantic and within the Americas points to an area of contention in the scholarship about the foundation of Diaspora communities in the Americas. Scholars such as Philip Morgan and Sidney Mintz of the "creolization school" have focused on the transition of diverse groups of African captives to African Americans. In contrast, Africanists such as John Thornton and Paul Lovejoy, who represent the "diaspora" position, argue that the processes of capture, the Middle Passage, colonization, and enslavement did not

[98] See AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias and Francisco de Quero, bills of sale and powers of attorney.

completely rupture identities and communities that had been previously formed in Africa.[99] Recent studies on Africans and their descendants in New Spain have been influenced by the "diaspora" position, and argue that before 1650, Africans defined their group identities and communities based on common African origins, rather than African ethnonyms.[100] Based on Frank Proctor's analysis of marriage petitions and registers in seventeenth-century Mexico City, Angolan captives and creole slaves largely did not interact with one another.[101] And some creoles may have feared that associating with newly arrived Africans would result in the loss of their social status. Marriage patterns of African descent people are one source with which to examine communities and social networks among this population. I will analyze marriage records of enslaved and free people in Antequera in the following chapters, but these findings ultimately suggest that the multiple processes of movement and removal forced creole and bozal slaves to carve out their own identities and communities or assimilate to the growing casta group and Spanish culture in Antequera.

The constant influx of creole and bozal slaves to Antequera supports the idea that internal slave traffic continued alongside and even replaced a declining, but still significant, transatlantic slave trade. The traffic of African captives and creole slaves involved a wide range of participants and irregular patterns of trading. At times, slave merchants in Veracruz forged ties

---

[99] Frank Proctor, "African Diasporic Ethnicity in Mexico City to 1650," in *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora,* ed. Sherwin K. Bryant, Rachel Sarah O'Toole and Ben Vinson III (Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2012),52.

[100] The distinctions between self-identification of African ethnonyms, such as Bran and Arará in marriage applications, and the labels of African origins, such as Congo and Angola that appear in marriage registers, reveal that ecclesiastical authorities were less concerned with recording ethnic differences. At the same time, marriage patterns of the 1640s demonstrate that newly arrived Africans, and namely Angolans, communicated with and sought out social networks with people who arrived from similar regions of Africa.

[101] Proctor, 66.

with traders in Seville, Lisbon, West Central Africa, and Manila and, in turn, imported African-born slaves to Antequera. On other occasions, however, fractured trading networks facilitated new connections between different factors or agents who dealt with various European traders at the port of Veracruz. Adding to this complexity is the fact that some asiento holders brought representatives, who were often family members. Some recent African arrivals were likely a type of contraband, but others arrived as a result of the asiento system. Internal slave trading networks were complicated, too. Factors and merchants based in Veracruz frequently sold recent arrivals to merchants in Mexico City, and those merchants resold the same enslaved people to Oaxacan merchants. Veracruzan slave merchants also sold African captives directly to Spanish elites in Antequera. The most common type of slave sale, however, occurred between Oaxacan merchants and merchants from Guatemala, Puebla, Mexico City, or Veracruz. Again, the frequency and continuity of these transactions suggest that an internal slave trade in New Spain was still thriving in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

This chapter deepens our understanding of slave traffic in New Spain. My findings demonstrate that in spite of the predominance of indigenous labor systems in the seventeenth century, merchants in Spanish colonial cities still relied on slave labor. The forced migration of African captives and the ongoing reliance on creole slaves in the late seventeenth century is evidence that Antequera was indeed part of the African diaspora in Spanish America. This city was a nexus for trade that connected southern New Spain with the viceregal capital and ports along both coasts. African-born and American-born slaves were imported along with other valuable commodities such as indigo, cacao, and cochineal. This influx of enslaved people was more scaled-down in comparison to other areas of Spanish America, but the fact remains that creole and bozal slaves steadily arrived from ports in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and from

other cities in the Americas. As the transatlantic slave trade waned, the regional slave market in Oaxaca adapted and evolved into a complex system of slave sales, donations, and overland trafficking. This re-evaluation of the transatlantic, inter-colonial, and interregional slave trades thus identifies the role that Oaxaca played in extending internal routes of commerce in New Spain, and its position within the broader diaspora of Spanish America and the Atlantic World.

CHAPTER 3

Experiences of the Enslaved in Oaxaca

The experiences of enslaved women and men in Antequera resembled that of other slaves in Spanish America. Although the lives of enslaved people in the Spanish colonial world varied widely, in the early-to-mid colonial period, bondsmen and bondswomen exercised a certain degree of personal autonomy. In spite of the harsh labor, violence, and punishment that urban and rural slaves endured, enslaved people in Antequera were able to carve out some liberties in their public and private lives, however limited. Women and men conceptualized their own status and rights and based on this understanding, they endured, fought for, and secured their rights within the confines of Spanish colonialism and the institution of slavery. This considerable autonomy suggests that the lives of the enslaved were not completely defined and shaped by slave owners or colonial institutions.[1] And despite the variety of Diaspora experiences, enslaved men and women still constructed and defined their own experiences through their self-expression and behavior. Some enslaved people, for instance, used colonial court tactics to defend their legal rights or to challenge injustices within the institution of slavery.[2] Other enslaved men and women forged ethnic and racial ties through marriage and interpersonal connections.[3] In building

[1] Frank T. Proctor, "*Damned Notions of Liberty": Slavery, Culture, and Power in Colonial Mexico, 1640-1769* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010*),* 4-8; Rachel O'Toole, "As Historical Subjects, The African Diaspora in Colonial Latin American History," *History Compass* 11, no. 12 (2013): 1095-1097.

[2] See O'Toole, *Bound Lives*; Lane, *Quito 1599*; Komisaruk, *Labor and Love in Guatemala.*

[3] See Bennett, *Africans in Colonial* Mexico; Von Germeten, *Black Blood Brothers*; Castillo-Palma, *Cholula sociedad mestiza en ciudad india.*

a sense of community, enslaved people relied on social networks to contest slaveholders and challenge structures of colonialism.

This chapter examines the extraordinary and everyday lived experiences of enslaved men and women in Antequera and its surrounding regions. By analyzing both common and exceptional cases in the historical record, this chapter evaluates the type of labor that enslaved people performed, and negotiations between slaveholders and the enslaved. This chapter also distinguishes between the experiences of urban slaves in Antequera and plantation slaves who lived and worked in the city's environs. The comparison complicates our understanding of slavery in Oaxaca by revealing the different kinds of treatment and unique freedoms on which urban and rural slaves capitalized. Finally, this chapter traces the strategies that enslaved women and men adopted to attain legal and extralegal freedom in Antequera and its surrounding regions.

Slave Life in Antequera and its Surrounding Regions

Upon arrival at various American ports, enslaved Africans and their descendants were transported to work in several lucrative industries in Spanish America and Brazil. The labor of enslaved women and men propped up the plantation economy in places such as the Caribbean, Northeast Brazil, and Veracruz, New Spain.[4] Enslaved people played a critical role as workers in the silver mining industries of Zacatecas, New Spain and Potosí, Peru, and they were an important part of the domestic labor force in the homes of elites throughout Spanish America and

[4] See Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society*; Klein, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean;* Cardoso, *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz & Pernambuco*; Naveda Chávez-Hita, *Trabajadores esclavos en las haciendas azucareras de Córdoba, Veracruz*; Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz.*

Brazil.[5] In short, enslaved men and women performed a variety of skilled and unskilled tasks. In the Valley of Oaxaca, this work was a part of two distinct systems of coerced labor: urban slavery in Antequera and plantation slavery on the outskirts of the city.

Urban slavery included many different types of labor, which varied depending on the market and the availability of valuable commodities in the different regions of New Spain. For instance, the profitable textile industry in Puebla de los Ángeles created a space for enslaved women and men to collaborate in Puebla's textile mills, whereas enslaved men took a more active role in the extraction, processing, and export of metal in the silver-producing cities of Guanajuato, León, and Zacatecas.[6] *Jornaleros*, or slaves who could negotiate their daily wages, were more common in the viceregal capital of Mexico City than in any other urban center in the colony.[7] Regardless of region, however, domestic service was a common form of slave labor in most cities of New Spain.

Enslaved women performed public and private tasks that were typical of urban life in New Spain. According to the 1753 Mexico City census, enslaved women performed domestic service as personal servants and cooks in the homes of Spanish elites.[8] They also raised and cared for the children of Spanish elites as their nannies and wet nurses. Although enslaved women were not considered to make direct contributions to the development of urban societies,

---

[5] See Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians in a Silver City*; Bigelow, "Women, Men, and the Legal Languages of Mining in the Colonial Andes"; Velázquez, *Mujeres de origen africano en la capital novohispana.*

[6] See Sierra, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico*; Sierra and Velasco Murillo, "Mine Workers and Weavers: Afro-Indigenous Labor Arrangements and Interactions in Puebla and Zacatecas".

[7] Proctor, *Damned Notions of Liberty,* 31. Jornaleros were enslaved people who negotiated their employment and daily wages.

[8] María Elisa Velázquez, *Mujeres de origen africano en la capital novohispana, siglos XVII y XVIII* (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2006), 162-163.

their labor was nevertheless equally significant to that of their male counterparts. Enslaved cooks, for example, not only labored in the homes of Spanish elites, but they also worked in religious spaces such as parishes, and even in secular areas such as the viceregal palace in Mexico City.[9] Spaniards' homes, and kitchens, in particular, were private spaces that facilitated increased inter-ethnic contact, as indigenous women and *mestizas* also labored in these spaces. Aside from domestic service, bondswomen also contributed to the local economy by fabricating and selling local products as vendors in *tiendas*. And to a lesser degree, enslaved women worked along with free and enslaved men in *sombrero* and textile mills.[10]

Enslaved men also performed a wide range of occupations in Spanish colonial cities. Like bondswomen, male slaves worked closely with merchants and street vendors, by selling goods in the shops of Spanish elites.[11] Throughout the colony, bondsmen were domestic laborers as cooks, coachmen, and butlers, and they also performed domestic tasks such as cleaning and gardening.[12] Enslaved men often worked as assistants to local artisans, and apprentice contracts gave enslaved men the chance to qualify as journeymen in a particular craft as tailors, carpenters, silversmiths, hat makers, chair makers, candle makers, and cobblers.[13] While these types of public and domestic work facilitated inter-ethnic interactions, this was nevertheless coerced labor, in which enslaved people had to create opportunities for themselves within the confines of slavery.

---

[9] Ibid., 197.

[10] Ibid., 210.

[11] Ibid., 167.

[12] Proctor, *Damned Notions of Liberty,* 31.

[13] Ibid., 35.

In the 1650s, the regional economy of Antequera was still based on Indian labor. Indians continued to retain their lands in the Valley of Oaxaca, and yet, an abundance of land was concentrated among a small group of Spanish elites. The holders of the largest estates in the Valley included the Ramírez de Aguilars, the Jaúregui Pinelos, the Maldonados, the Bohórquezes, the Lazo de la Vegas, and the Guendulains. Despite this concentration of wealth among Spanish elites, most Spaniards in the Valley owned relatively small estates that were subject to significant fluctuations in productivity because of the precariousness of agricultural activity in the region.[14] This unsteady commercial activity suggests that Spaniards also continued to rely on Indians for daily sustenance, as evidenced by their exploitation of Indian labor through the *repartimiento* system.

This ongoing reliance on native labor and resources shaped life in Antequera. The city's textile and manufacturing industries had long disappeared by the 1660s, but cochineal was still the most lucrative commodity exported from this region, and Indians continued to be the primary producers of the valuable red dye.[15] At the same time, Antequera's service needs created a demand for skilled and unskilled labor, and several social changes came about as a result of this demand for labor. For instance, the city's population and geographic size continued to grow in the second half of the seventeenth century. This moderate population growth is mainly due to the recovery of the native population and partially attributed to an in-migration of Zapotecs from surrounding Valley *cabeceras*, as well as the growth of the *casta* population. Indians in

[14] John Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), 106-107.

[15] Francisco de Burgoa, *Geográfica descripción de la parte septentrional del Polo Ártico de la América y, nueva iglesia de las Indias Occidentales, y sitio astronómico de esta Provincia de Predicadores de Antequera Valle de Oaxaca* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1989), 1: 272.

Antequera were a relatively closed ethnic group who made up the majority of the skilled labor force in Antequera, and they were often employed as masons, bakers, tailors, and shoemakers in the city.[16] This labor force, however, was supplemented by African slaves because the Indian population had just begun to recover between the 1650s and 1670s, and the growing city commanded a larger labor force. By the 1690s, Antequera's overall population had grown to approximately 6,000 people, and the city's social hierarchy became increasingly stratified to include the socio-racial categories of *español europeo, español, mestizo, mulato libre, mulato esclavo, negro libre, negro esclavo*, and *indio*. The adoption of these colonial categories suggests that Spanish elites sought to maintain order and control of colonial subjects.[17]

Enslaved women and men were an integral part of urban life and the development of the city of Antequera. Judicial records of the early-to-mid colonial period show that enslaved men, women, and children performed a wide range of occupations including domestic service, shop keeping, and construction in Antequera. Enslaved Africans are reported to have worked in Oaxaca as early as the 1530s.[18] For instance, approximately 2,600 enslaved men toiled alongside Indian wage laborers to help build Antequera's cathedral in the second half of the sixteenth century.[19] More than a century later, enslaved men such as Juan de Salmaron and Juan Gabriel produced and sold leather goods at a tannery next to the Basilica de la Soledad in the 1660s.[20] In

[16] Chance, 120-121.

[17] Ibid., 126.

[18] Ibid., 51.

[19] Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Oaxaca (AHAO), *Libro de la fábrica de la catedral de Oaxaca, 1584-1604*, 52r-52v. Enslaved people helped indigenous laborers build the city's cathedral during the first phase of construction in the late-sixteenth century.

[20] Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Indiferente Virreinal, box 4547, exp. 14, fs. 5-6v.

addition to helping build Antequera, slaves also carved out religious spaces for themselves, despite their limitations. Chronicler of the Dominican order, Friar Francisco de Burgoa, documented the presence of African descent people who primarily attended religious spaces such as Santa Catalina de Sena and the Iglesia de Nuestra Señora del Carmen:

> Santa Catherina de Sena, subject to my Order, has a very good and capable hospital, with a decent church, where it administers to free [people], and slaves of the City, mulatos as well as blacks, and they are buried; it has four churches…Third, another church, of Nuestra Señora del Carmen, [the] foundation of the mulatos and ladinos, from which comes a large and lucid procession on Holy Wednesday, and here they have a vicar who administers to them, and says mass…[21]

Burgoa's description of these ecclesiastical spaces not only affirms the presence of free and enslaved African descended people in seventeenth-century Antequera, but he also exposes an essential part of the slave experience in the city. Like other regions in the Spanish colonial empire, bondsmen and bondswomen in Antequera used religious institutions to forge and maintain social networks. The church of Nuestra Señora del Carmen produced large gatherings that included people who were recent African arrivals, mixed-race persons, and individuals acclimated to Spanish colonial society. As avenues for limited freedoms, these religious spaces still relied on slave labor in Antequera and its environs. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the nunnery of Santa Catalina de Sena employed at least eight enslaved men and women in Antequera, and another 77 slaves on their properties in the city's environs.[22]

[21] Burgoa, 1: 270-271.

[22] Archivo Histórico de Notarías del Estado de Oaxaca (AHNO), Protocolos Notariales (PN), Diego Benaias, vol. 150, ff. 484; vol. 153, ff. 576; vol. 156, fs. 238, 598v; vol. 157, ff. 253; Diego Díaz Romero, vol. 200, ff. 205; vol. 204, ff. 134v; vol. 207, ff. 70; Francisco de Quero, vol. 440, ff. 95v.

And in 1670, María del Carmen, a mulata slave who worked as a *criada* in the nunnery, was traded to a priest in the Archdiocese of Antequera.[23]

Spanish elites employed enslaved men, women, and children as domestic laborers in Antequera. As María Elisa Velázquez noted in the case of Mexico City, enslaved women often worked as domestic servants in Antequera, as well. Many bondswomen appear in Antequera's archival records as domestics, criadas, or servants in the homes of Spanish elites. For instance, Jacinto de la Edesa Verastegui employed several of his enslaved men and women for domestic service. Verastegui held several religious and secular offices as a dean and cantor in the city's cathedral and as treasurer of the Santa Cruzada, and he purchased no less than four enslaved women and men between 1687 and 1694.[24] While most of these enslaved people likely labored in one of his multiple properties, one of these enslaved women, Gerónima, cooked in his home. Verastegui purchased Gerónima in 1691; after nine years of domestic service, and upon his death, Gerónima obtained her legal freedom in 1699.[25]

Other slaves worked alongside slaveholders to produce and sell various products in Antequera. Joseph de Saola y Olano was a merchant originally from the northern region of Durango who purchased, sold, and bequeathed 27 slaves between the 1690s and 1712.[26] Saola owned a shop in which he sold a wide range of goods, including notebooks, wooden items, cochineal, and cloth. Saola's testament, however, suggests that he also might have been involved

[23] AHAO, Arquidiócesis, Diocesano, Gobierno, Religiosos, box 9, exp. 32.

[24] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 144, ff. 208; vol. 146, ff. 419; vol. 147, ffs. 52, 545.

[25] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 147, ff. 521; vol. 152, ff. 76v.

[26] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 150, fs. 284v, 360; vol. 157, fs. 179, 407; vol. 164, fs. 224, 286v; vol. 165, fs. 1-28.

in the region's textile industry. Merchandise listed in his property inventory included blankets from Villa Alta, fabric from China, velvet cloth, undergarments from England, buttons, ribbon, pins, scissors, and even French thread and silk.[27] Although textile mills were relatively uncommon in eighteenth-century Antequera, it is possible that Saola owned a textile mill or that he was involved in the commerce of valuable textiles and dyes. Thus, it is likely that Saola's equal number of male and female slaves worked with him in producing and selling clothing and other merchandise in Antequera.

Miguel de la Flor, a twenty-four-year-old mulato slave who was a personal servant to Luis Rodríguez Gallegos in the early 1660s, described his experience as a slave in Antequera. In May 1664, Miguel was questioned by the Holy Office of the Inquisition for composing comedies and a book of carols. In his testimony, Miguel described the kind of labor that he performed for his former owner, Luis Rodríguez, and the impact of this experience on his life. Rodríguez was a merchant and shopkeeper who had leprosy, and hence, Miguel spent most of his time as a caregiver. Miguel claimed that he purchased and prepared food for Rodríguez and that he attended to his owner's needs every day.

Miguel lived in captivity during his childhood and adult life. His testimony reveals intimate details about slave life in Antequera. Miguel was an enslaved mulato with an enslaved Angolan mother, a traveling merchant father from Galicia, Spain, and four siblings who were also domestic slaves.[28] Miguel was born in the home of his mother's slaveholder, Floriana de Milan. Miguel would remain in captivity in Floriana's home until he was eight years old. At that age, Miguel was sold to a merchant named Luis Rodríguez Gallegos. Miguel helped Rodriguez

[27] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 164, ff. 286v.

[28] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 4547, exp. 14, fs. 1r-2v.

sell merchandise in his store. Since Rodriguez was a single man without children, and a leper, Miguel attended to his every need by purchasing and preparing food for him and even administering medication to him. Miguel was also responsible for collecting sums of forty to fifty pesos from various local merchants who owed Rodríguez money. He had to manage the funds for the purchase of food and ointment and do just about anything that Rodríguez requested. In short, this money sustained the two of them. Another merchant named Miguel de Fuentes later purchased Miguel. He worked with Fuentes as an *esclavo de pago*, serving his owner in many different ways, performing many tasks related to local commerce, including measuring the weight of goods such as cochineal.[29]

Miguel lamented his miserable state as the slave of Luis Rodríguez. He confessed that he often left Rodriguez's home "bored," cursing his misfortune.[30] Then, in the context of the Inquisition trial, Miguel complained:

> I can no longer suffer [in] this way. What does this man want[?] That I give him what is necessary for his illness and assist him day and night without sleep…I do not know what I will do.[31]

Miguel's declaration of boredom could be interpreted as the ordinary complaint of a bondsman who despised his work; at the same time, Miguel's words reveal the alienation and human struggle that he, like other male and female slaves, experienced in captivity. By the time Miguel reached twenty-four years of age, he was born into slavery, resold to multiple slaveholders, and twice removed from his mother and siblings. Thus, it is likely that he was cut off from family members and friends, or that his connections with them were disrupted, at the very least. As

---

[29] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 4547, exp. 14, fs. 3r-3v.

[30] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 4547, exp. 14, ff. 10v.

[31] Ibid.

Miguel worked for various slaveholders in Antequera, he was forced to perform multiple kinds of private and public-facing labor, while isolated from his former social networks. It is no surprise that Miguel's words reveal an enslaved man's exhaustion with a lifetime of enslavement. Joseph Miller argues that the life histories of enslaved people speak to both greater historical processes, such as trade and colonialism, and intimate moments in the everyday lives of slaves. Diaspora experiences are unique in the ways that enslaved people expressed their emotions and attempted to construct their social networks.[32]

Although Miguel was twice-removed from his mother and siblings, he still managed to interact with and expand his social networks to include a wide of range of individuals in Antequera. Miguel's godparents were also enslaved, which suggests that enslaved people surrounded Miguel at an early age. Despite his condition of enslavement, he was introduced to religious officials in the city. Miguel was baptized by Lucas de Zarate, a priest in Antequera's cathedral. Miguel also learned to read and write with a mulato schoolteacher named Juan de los Reyes, and he studied grammar with Br. Espinosa, suggesting that local priests educated enslaved people, and free mulatos lived and worked in Antequera as early as the 1640s.[33] As a shopkeeper, Miguel interacted with other enslaved mulatos, such as Juan de Salmaron and Juan Gabriel, who ran a tannery next to the Basilica de la Soledad.[34] Miguel was in constant contact with ethnic others because he frequented nearby shops and he even played *a los dados* (dice)

[32] Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet, introduction to *Biography and the Black Atlantic,* eds. Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 2-3.

[33] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 4547, exp. 14, ff. 3r.

[34] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 4547, exp. 14, fs. 5-6v.

with neighboring residents, a hatmaker named Miguel de Aion and a Spaniard named Cristobal de Palacios.[35]

Surprisingly, Miguel composed three comedies that were commissioned by the religious officials, Antonio de Mendarío of the Compañia de Jesus in Puebla and Gonçalo de Barçelone, *provisor* of Oaxaca. Miguel also composed a book of prayers that were recited in Antequera's cathedral. Most importantly, Miguel wrote a 147-page manuscript dedicated to the Dominican friar and historian, Francisco de Burgoa.[36] Therefore, Miguel is an exceptional individual in the historical record. His literacy made him highly sought after by other Spaniards, Indians, and *castas* who were unable to read or write. Likewise, Miguel's daily interactions with religious and secular officials at multiple levels of the social hierarchy suggests that he was able to cross boundaries that a typical slave could not. Nonetheless, Miguel's knowledge and agency point to the degree of struggle that enslaved people experienced in Antequera.

Antequera's location at the intersection of lucrative commercial trade routes connecting central and southern Mexico, what is now the Pan American highway, enabled some enslaved people to work in the homes of Spanish elites and on plantations outside the city. Antequera residents, Simón Salvatierra and María Ruiz de Torres, inherited a couple of haciendas in Cuilapan, in the jurisdiction of the Marquesado del Valle. Their cattle ranch included six enslaved men and women. In a legal dispute over their inheritance, Simón and his wife, María, insisted that four of these enslaved women—María, Manuela, Petrona and their mother, María—were domestic servants who worked in their father's home in Antequera.[37] However, witnesses

[35] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 1118, exp. 14, fs. 4-9.

[36] See AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 1118, exp. 14, fs. 16v-22v. Most of Miguel's manuscripts have not survived, but several of his illustrations are included in this document.

[37] AHNO, Diligencias, Diego Benaias, vol. 155, ff. 83v.

of Simón confirmed that these four enslaved women, along with María's husband, Juan Nicolas, and another mulato slave named Antonio, all toiled in Simón's hacienda in Cuilapan. When local authorities attempted to retrieve the enslaved from Cuilapan, the hacienda's *mayordomo* (steward, manager) confirmed that these women and men had been transported to Simón's home in Antequera.[38] This legal dispute illustrates how enslaved people often moved between the city and its environs, performing both urban and plantation labor in the Valley of Oaxaca.

In other parts of New Spain, as early as the 1530s, enslaved people played a significant role in producing sugar. Slaves on sugar plantations in Veracruz, for example, worked approximately sixteen hours a day. These people often started their workday by grinding multiple cauldrons of sugar; by daybreak, they transported sugar from the boiling house to the refinery to dry it in the sun. Skilled laborers such as *maestros de azúcar*, cartwrights, blacksmiths, press operators, carpenters, and sugar refiners performed more specialized tasks, whereas those who toiled in the cane fields did unskilled work. The latter group of slaves typically cut cane and ratoons or picked weeds. Those working in the cane fields were also responsible for collecting and moving cane to the mills, irrigating the fields, cutting and carrying firewood, and repairing machinery. These plantation slaves were closely monitored by an overseer, a mayordomo who maintained the hierarchy and workflow of the estate.[39]

Although sugarcane cultivation in New Spain was primarily concentrated in Veracruz and Jalapa, sugar mills and haciendas also existed in Antequera's environs. In 1550, for instance, the Marqués del Valle owned 225 African and Indian slaves in Tlaltenango, and by 1580, he

[38] AHNO, Diligencias, Diego Benaias, vol. 155, ff. 56.

[39] Colin Palmer, *Slaves of the White God, Blacks in Mexico 1570-1650* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 67-69.

owned another plantation in Orizaba with 123 African slaves. On average, however, most plantations in New Spain included between 20 and 40 slaves.[40] Sugar plantations in the Valley of Oaxaca included a mix of men and women who were either bozal or creole slaves. Some of these slaves labored in the areas surrounding Antequera, such as the Hacienda Valdeflores, which was located north of Santa Ana Tlapacoya, owned by the Bohórquez family, and included at least five enslaved people in the 1620s.[41]

Aside from performing long and arduous labor, plantation slaves suffered from high mortality rates, illness, and mistreatment; as in other regions of the Atlantic world, bondsmen and bondswomen endured many forms of punishment and violence. Historians of slavery in British North America have remarked on Spanish legal and religious protections that gave slaves the opportunity to voice their discontent against abusive treatment. However, Spanish law, the *Siete Partidas* in particular, did not establish clear measures of treatment and abuse. Instead, the body of medieval Castilian codes defined the master-slave relationship as one in which slaveholders exercised complete control over their slaves. These laws, however, prevented slaveholders from mutilating, killing, or starving their slaves, as these actions were contrary to the natural state of man. In short, the Spanish colonial state urged slaveholders to treat their slaves fairly, and it provided a loose framework in which master-slave relations could be negotiated.[42] Esteban de los Ángeles, for instance, was imprisoned by the Holy Inquisition for blasphemy, and he used the ecclesiastical court system to define his understanding of fair treatment. Esteban was an enslaved mulato who labored on a sugar plantation owned by Pedro de

[40] Ibid., 67.

[41] Chance, 96.

[42] Proctor, *Damned Notions of Liberty,* 107-108.

Espina, one of the most prominent Spaniards in Antequera. In his testimony, Esteban spoke about his treatment on Pedro's plantation, which was located in San Pablo de Mitla. At the time, the plantation's majordomo, Francisco de Espina, accused Esteban of yelling scandalous and ill-sounding words "when his owners obliged him to perform harsh labor."[43] The inquisitors thus perceived Esteban's actions as an attempt to liberate himself from his condition of enslavement.[44]

Esteban's testimony illuminates a bondsman's understanding of fair labor practices and slave treatment on plantations in the Valley of Oaxaca. Esteban, his witnesses, and the mayordomo all presented similar versions of the same narrative. Although Pedro de Espina owned this plantation, his nephew, Francisco de Espina was the mayordomo of the plantation, and hence, Francisco was in direct contact with and had mistreated the enslaved people on Pedro's plantation. In 1705, Esteban and several other enslaved men brought Francisco before ecclesiastical authorities for *maltratamiento.* Esteban and another slave named Alonso Graxisti testified that Francisco had mistreated and inflicted violence on Esteban on several occasions. They reported that two years prior, Francisco had imprisoned Esteban in a cell on the plantation. Since Esteban refused to exit the cell, he ordered another slave named Juan to retrieve Esteban and chain him to a large, heavy trunk. Francisco then flogged Esteban, and while he whipped him, and because of his suffering, Esteban renounced God. As a result, Francisco punched and whipped Esteban with even greater force. Esteban later fled the plantation carrying the heavy chains, but shortly thereafter, Esteban reconciled with his slaveholder, and he returned to the plantation with the chains. Three months later, Francisco imprisoned Esteban for another two

[43] AGN, Inquisición, vol. 735, exp. 4, ff. 20.

[44] AGN, Inquisición, vol. 735, exp. 4, ff. 21r.

months because he was accused of having illicit relations with his *comadre.* In his defense, Francisco presented a different perspective on his treatment of the enslaved people who worked at the San Joseph plantation. Francisco admitted that he imprisoned Esteban in a chamber in the home of the hacienda. However, Francisco also testified that he only admonished Esteban after he heard him renounce God and refuse to exit the cell, suggesting that Esteban's punishment was not excessively cruel, but rather justified because Esteban had renounced God, disobeyed the mayordomo, and attempted to escape the plantation. Still, the ecclesiastical courts in Mexico City agreed with Esteban in his claims of mistreatment.

Enslaved Subjectivities in Oaxaca

It is clear that enslaved people in the African Diaspora dealt with violent loss, subordination, and failures in the face of colonialism and capitalism. Men, women, and children were vulnerable to various dangers, and they faced limits of freedom and constraints on their status as colonial subjects. However, experiences of the enslaved were more dynamic and varied than many scholars might have expected. Slaves used multiple strategies to define their lives on their own terms. For some enslaved people, this agency led to legal freedom and social or economic mobility. Others turned to self-fashioning as a means to reinvent the self and to affirm enslaved subjectivities. Hence, it is through personal testimonies in civil, criminal, and Inquisition cases that historians can capture fragments of a lifetime of experience. Thus, these brief biographies emphasize the individual agency of enslaved women and men as actors who understood systems of exploitation and attempted to construct their own identities and experiences under Spanish colonial rule.

For example, as an enslaved shopkeeper, Miguel de la Flor was in constant contact with both free and enslaved people of many ethnicities. On one occasion, Miguel spoke with Juan de Salmaron, a mulato slave who worked at a tannery next to the Iglesia de la Soledad.[45] In another circumstance, Miguel turned to his friend, Pedro de Reaño, a Spanish barber to whom he confessed that he feared that the Holy Inquisition was pursuing him. On various occasions, Miguel interacted with Spanish secular and religious officials when he played the *juego de manos* (conjuring trick). Miguel testified that on one occasion, he entered a nearby hat store and he caught the cleric, Br. D. Joseph Mendez and Francisco de Urutia Mendoza y Matos playing *los dados* (dice).[46] Miguel quickly dug into his pocket, and he pulled out a sheet of paper, then boasted about his "demonic" orations. Mendez and Matos not only confiscated some of Miguel's writings, but they also threatened to report his actions to his slaveholder and the commissioner of the Inquisition. On a different day, Francisco, who was known to have played dice with Miguel, attempted to rip apart Miguel's manuscript. Francisco later reported Miguel to the commissioner of the Inquisition, and although he admitted to playing dice, he insisted that Miguel had committed a crime by showing his manuscript. Francisco's story was corroborated with that of the store owner, Miguel de Aiyon, who affirmed that Miguel was a regular patron in his store and that he knew how to write.

Miguel's ability to move across multiple colonial spaces was a result of many factors. As a shopkeeper, he was required to interact with other merchants, colonial administrators, and residents in the lower strata of society. In the social context of the seventeenth century, Antequera's growing casta population undoubtedly contributed to and strengthened cross-

[45] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 4547, exp. 14, ff. 6v.

[46] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 4547, exp. 14, fs. 9-12.

cultural contact. By the 1660s, Antequera had become a diverse colonial city with Spanish, Indian, mestizo, mulato, and black residents. The tributary census from 1661 suggests that African-descended people represented nearly 26 percent of the population who paid tribute in Antequera.[47] This socio-racial group of African-descent people far exceeded mestizos in number, who made up only ten percent of the residents in the city. This demographic trend continued until the last decade of the seventeenth century, when free and enslaved blacks and mulatos still represented nearly one-quarter (24.4 percent) of the overall populace.[48] Moreover, the majority of the African-descended population was made up of free mulatos, suggesting that the group of free mulatos grew along with the larger casta group. This important fact offers some insight into the social position of African-descent people in Antequera in the late seventeenth century. Free African descendants were able to navigate multiple colonial spaces freely; even enslaved people, such as Miguel, sought out ways to challenge the confines of colonialism through their behavior.

Miguel's knowledge and cross-cultural contact likely led to his social and economic capital in Antequera. When Francisco de Matos confiscated Miguel's note, he had to ask someone else to read it for him because he was unable to read it himself. Likewise, the owner of the hat store, Miguel de Ayion, asked Miguel to write a letter for him on a different occasion. These actions suggest that Miguel was literate at a time when many residents in Antequera, including Spanish merchants, could not read or write. Moreover, the fact that these Spaniards procured Miguel's assistance suggests that Miguel had the knowledge and skills that would potentially lead to wage labor, as an esclavo de pago and material wealth, or at a minimum,

[47] Chance, 130.

[48] Ibid., 132. Marriage records from 1693 to 1700 reveal the impact of the growing casta population, as formal unions were one avenue to attain social mobility. Surprisingly however, a greater number of free mulatos (20.1 percent) married in comparison to mestizos (14.5 percent).

Miguel's knowledge would help him attain social mobility in this colonial society. Still, Miguel's knowledge and actions were tempered by systems of institutional power. Miguel managed to play dice with men of different socioeconomic backgrounds. Likewise, his writings and illustrations, and his confidence to reveal his manuscript, suggest that Miguel was able to move freely in this colonial city and that he was not concerned with the hegemonic power of structures of colonialism. However, Miguel was never entirely free from the threat of the Inquisition and punishment from his slaveholder. In other words, although Miguel appears in the historical record as an exceptional individual with remarkable qualities, his experience as an enslaved person was nonetheless quite ordinary.

Miguel's exceptional abilities and his experience in Antequera must be considered within the context of the broader Diaspora to New Spain. Despite the growth of the casta population in the colony, enslaved arrivals to Antequera prevailed well into the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The asientos of Domingo Grillo and Agustín Lomelín, and Juan Barosso del Pozo and Nicolas Porcio, facilitated a continuous influx of African captives by way of slave ships such as the Nuestra Señora de la Soledad between the 1660s and 1680s.[49] Likewise, the abundance of slave sales in the late seventeenth century signals the continued presence of enslaved people in Antequera and suggests that slaves were still an essential part of the labor force in this colonial city. In other words, Antequera's diverse society included a significant population of both free and enslaved African descendants, as well as African captives and creoles. Although it is difficult to determine the precise number of free and enslaved people during this period, it is indeed possible that many free mulatos enjoyed a certain degree of social status in Antequera as

[49] See Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Contaduría, 261, n. 9; AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 144, fs. 8, 36; Francisco de Quero, vol. 416, fs. 152, 164, 165; vol. 417, fs. 3-128; Slavevoyages.org.

their enslaved counterparts continued to experience varying degrees of poor treatment. As a result, bondsmen and bondswomen employed numerous strategies to negotiate their conditions of captivity.

Interethnic interactions and mobility were not as common on Oaxaca's plantations as they were in Antequera. In contrast to Miguel's many "freedoms," Esteban de los Ángeles communicated exclusively with other laborers on Pedro de Espina's plantation. In his testimony, Esteban shared intimate details about his interactions with those who surrounded him on the San Joseph plantation. Although Esteban was an enslaved *mulato*, he was married to a *mestiza* who also worked on the plantation. And in spite of his formal union with Josepha García, Esteban had extramarital affairs with several other enslaved women on the plantation. Interpersonal relationships among laborers is an interesting area of investigation because these formal and informal unions, and how they were perceived by authorities, reveal a great deal about master-slave relations. In British North America, for instance, slaveholders attempted to control slave unions in order to increase the slave population through reproduction. Although this practice also occurred in Spanish America to some degree, it was not as common as it was in the U.S. South. Nonetheless, enslaved people in New Spain had the legal right to marry other enslaved individuals or free persons. The distinction here is that slave owners relied on harsh treatment to control social relations and ultimately, to prevent social unrest. On one occasion, the mayordomo of Pedro de Espina's plantation chained and imprisoned Esteban for three months because he carried on an illicit relationship with Petrona—his comadre, a mulata married to a Spaniard. Esteban maintained relationships with other enslaved women on the plantation, too. He had sexual relations with two mulata sisters who were married to an Indian man and a mulato. Esteban was also later involved with the daughter of one of these mulatas. In short, Esteban

admitted to perpetuating illicit relationships with women other than his spouse, but Francisco's harsh treatment of Esteban shows that overseers and slaveholders overstepped their bounds and violated Law 6 of Title XXI in the *Siete Partidas*, which stated that:

> A master has complete authority over his slave to dispose of him as he pleases. Nevertheless, he should not kill or wound him, although he may give him cause for it, except by order of the judge of the district; nor should he strike him in a way contrary to natural reason…We also decree that, where a man is so cruel to his slaves as to kill them by starvation, or to wound or injure them so seriously that they cannot endure it, in cases of this kind said slaves can complain to the judge…[50]

In brief, the mayordomo acted on behalf of the slaveholder's rights by punishing Esteban. He also used excessive cruelty and force by chaining and imprisoning Esteban, which in turn, Esteban used as part of his defense during his Inquisition trial.

This legal case reveals vital information about cross-cultural contact in Antequera's surrounding regions. It is clear that the city of Antequera became increasingly diverse during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries for many reasons. The growth of the casta population and recovery of the Indian population contributed to a type of ethnic diversity that spilled over to the city's surrounding regions that were previously dominated by diverse groups of indigenous people. In the context of the San Joseph sugar plantation, black and mulato slaves worked alongside Indian, *mestizo*, and Spanish laborers who provided personal service, and unskilled and skilled labor to Pedro de Espina. In comparison to urban slaves, Esteban engaged in collaborative and intimate relationships with other laborers, whereas Miguel de la Flor interacted and worked with free people at multiple levels of Antequera's society. Unlike

[50] *Las Siete Partidas, Volume 4: Family, Commerce, and the Sea: The Worlds of Women and Merchants*, trans. Samuel Parsons Scott, ed. Robert I. Burns (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 979.

the plantations of Veracruz and Tehuantepec or other sugar plantations in the Spanish colonial world, plantations in Antequera's surrounding regions employed wage laborers and enslaved people from diverse backgrounds. In sum, by the early eighteenth century, Antequera and surrounding cabeceras such as Mitla had become arenas of cross cultural-contact.

Esteban's experience on a sugar plantation in Mitla also enhances our understanding of social and economic changes in Antequera and its environs. Mining and manufacturing played a small role in Antequera's economy, and since silk production already had declined by the 1650s, only a few cotton-producing *obrajes* remained in the Valley. Cochineal was still a valuable product until the late eighteenth century, and the Crown required that Indian producers prepare, bundle, weigh, and tax the commodity in Antequera, before exporting the cochineal to Veracruz, and across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe. Environmental conditions also led to a fluctuating regional economy that affected life in the Valley. And environmental disasters, such as droughts and floods, dealt a blow to the growing regional commerce of the 1670s. In the 1680s, the combination of droughts, significant food shortages, and high prices in the Valley of Oaxaca forced Spaniards to continue to rely on Indians for sustenance. Consequently, brief surges in production in the Valley did not seem to affect Antequera's role in regional commerce, and the Valley continued to languish in terms of agricultural and ranching output throughout the early eighteenth century.[51] The decline in livestock and increase in mortgages also suggest that Spanish landowners in the Valley faced dire economic circumstances and were probably desperate to produce and export valuable goods. These conditions likely shaped Esteban's choice to flee and return to the San Joseph plantation.

[51] Chance, 108-109.

The Espina family was one of the six wealthiest Spanish families living in the Valley of Oaxaca. The Espinas owned multiple properties throughout the Valley, including the Hacienda San Bartolo, three ranches split between Mitla and Cuilapan, and a sugar mill near Ocotlán. The family was able to thrive, expand its landholdings, and attain elite status through a careful selection of marriage partners during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The patriarch, Pedro de Espina, obtained the family's holdings in the 1590s and his descendants married into other prominent families in Antequera in the seventeenth century.[52]

By the eighteenth century, however, everything changed when the Espina family lost most of its economic capital in the city. Several of their landholdings were transferred or passed on to individuals outside of their family. Between 1683 and 1699, various members of the Espina family purchased and sold several properties, including enslaved men and women, and they paid off various debts. The Espinas bought only two slaves while selling eleven enslaved people during this sixteen-year period.[53] This pattern continued in the first decade of the eighteenth century. The Espinas sold many more slaves than they had purchased, and they made a concerted effort to collect funds from merchants who were indebted to them. Pedro de Espina and Josepha de Espina Altamirano, for example, sold fourteen slaves, but they only purchased two enslaved men in the first decade of the seventeenth century.[54] Pedro also collected 1,200 pesos from two merchants and 150 pesos from Lorenzo Roman, a *pardo* who worked for Joseph de

[52] See William Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 117, 134.

[53] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 144, ff. 252; vol. 145, ff. 307; vol. 148, fs. 148, 568; vol. 152, fs. 161, 261, 423.

[54] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 156, fs. 397v, 756; vol. 160, ff. 418v; vol. 161, fs. 160v, 186v; vol. 162, ff. 358v.

Guendulain.[55] These frequent attempts to sell their enslaved men, women, and children suggest that by the eighteenth century, the Espina family was in debt and needed to pay off creditors by selling properties. Given the economic climate in the Valley of Oaxaca, the Espinas must have also been concerned to increase their profit through means beyond agricultural production. Environmental disasters such as droughts and floods affected agricultural production in the region and likely caused considerable stress for landowners and mayordomos who managed withering haciendas. It is possible that Pedro de Espina pressured Francisco to produce more. Consequently, Francisco may have responded by forcing laborers on the San Joseph plantation, including enslaved people like Esteban, to work long hours and perform harsh labor. And Esteban objected to the unfair treatment.

The case studies of Esteban de los Ángeles and Miguel de la Flor reveal slaves' understanding of fair treatment within the institution of slavery. In both cases, these men expressed discontent and even resisted their conditions of enslavement. Miguel relied on the ecclesiastical court to articulate his frustration with the labor that he was forced to perform, and to defend himself against the Inquisition's accusations of blasphemy. Similarly, Esteban turned to the secular and ecclesiastical courts to expose the mayordomo's mistreatment of enslaved people, including himself. Miguel was likely aware of the financial distress surrounding the Espina family and their plantation, and he undoubtedly adopted multiple strategies to defy the order of the plantation. Esteban engaged in illicit relationships, which likely caused tensions among free laborers and slaves on the plantation. Moreover, Miguel's refusal to conduct harsh labor was a direct form of resistance to the mayordomo and the plantation owner because the

[55] AHNO, PN, Diego Diaz Romero, vol. 204, ff. 151; Diego Benaias, vol. 153, ff. 543.

Espinas would suffer major financial losses for Esteban's lack of production. It seems that the courts acknowledged Esteban's claims because they began his case by stating:

> The mulato himself warns, he said voluntarily that because he appeared [in court], that his motive is to liberate himself from his state of slavery, making use of very ill-sounding and scandalous words when his masters forced him to work with some rigor...[56]

This statement established a strategy that Esteban adopted throughout his entire Inquisition trial. As Frank Proctor found in Mexico City, enslaved people generally committed blasphemy during or just before receiving punishment for slave flight, theft, or for failing to complete their duties.[57] Esteban's testimony and that of his witnesses reveal that the mayordomo had used excessive force in dealing with enslaved people on the San Joseph plantation. By stating that he renounced God in response to ill-treatment, and by admitting that he refused to exit the cell to avoid harsh labor, Esteban reveals how he defined acceptable behavior for both slaveholders and bondsmen and bondswomen. His actions also show that he was aware that his punishment was a form of unfair treatment within the institution of slavery, and he knew how to use the religious and legal means that were available to him. Therefore, Esteban's pattern of resistance was a strategy to escape from the conditions of his enslavement.

Manumission and freedoms outside the confines of Spanish colonialism

Enslaved women and men in the Valley of Oaxaca employed various strategies to secure legal freedom from their slaveholders. Similar to other regions in Spanish America, enslaved people relied on social networks to obtain funds for self-purchase, for guidance on how to

[56] AGN, Inquisición, vol. 735, exp. 4, fs. 21-21v.

[57] Proctor, *Damned Notions of Liberty,* 96.

navigate the judicial system, and for general support in the transition from enslavement to freedom. Throughout mainland Spanish America, the enslaved also used the language of the *Siete Partidas* to inform their understanding and options for gaining manumission. This legal document, which was based in Roman jurisprudence, included legal and moral provisions that simultaneously viewed the institution of slavery as a necessary evil and declared that freedom was a legitimate right of the enslaved.[58] For instance, Law 3 of Title XXII on Liberty indicates that "slaves deserve to be freed for the good things that they do," and includes a list of four circumstances in which slaves had the legal right to become free.[59] Enslaved women could demand manumission following incidents of violence, such as when a virgin was raped or if a female slave was forced into prostitution for the profit of her slaveholder. Slaves could also receive manumission if a person murdered their slaveholder or if slaves reported a conspiracy against the King.[60] To ensure the rights of enslaved people, the *Siete Partidas* also restricted the power of slaveholders by limiting the type and intensity of punishment imposed on bondsmen and bondswomen.[61] In addition, these codes supported slaveholders who manumitted their slaves, by justifying their actions as servicing God. Along with these methods for attaining manumission, Frederick Bowser identified three clear paths to legal freedom: manumission granted by slaveholders, self-purchase, and indirect freedom through *mestizaje*.[62]

---

[58] Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 273-274.

[59] *Las Siete Partidas*, 103.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., 16.

[62] Bowser, 274.

Manumission records from 1680 to 1730 illustrate that enslaved African descent people understood their status and the conditions of enslavement, and they employed various strategies to obtain legal freedom in Antequera. Based on my analysis of manumission letters, testaments, and payment obligations processed in the city, I argue that most black and mulato slaves obtained manumission between 1680 and 1730 because these notarial records are most abundant during this fifty-year period. Consequently, the most substantial corpus of notarial data involving free African descendants is dated from the first half of the eighteenth century, which suggests that recently freed slaves and their descendants were increasingly involved in the local economy, as they purchased and sold properties, and engaged in payment obligations with merchants in Antequera. With these records, I have identified four primary paths to legal freedom in Antequera: slaves obtained legal freedom through slaveholders' voluntary manumission for good service, upon the death of their owners, as conditional freedom, and through self-purchase. These modes of obtaining manumission imply that liberties were indeed attainable for black and mulato slaves in Antequera, but they also emphasize the challenges of attaining legal freedom because enslaved people were often at the mercy of slaveholders.

Many slaves obtained legal freedom through voluntary slaveholder manumission and upon the death of their owners. In most cases, the enslaved gained freedom upon the death of his or her owners through wills and testaments. In fewer instances, slaveholders freed their slaves with manumission letters when they were still alive. In both scenarios, manumission letters often included language stating that slaveholders freed slaves for their years of "good service" and their "fidelity and love" toward these individuals.[63] However, voluntary manumission from slaveholders was not simply an act of generosity—for two reasons. First, slave owners freed their

[63] Ibid.

slaves when they were either too old or unable to endure arduous labor and, hence, the enslaved were no longer useful to them. Furthermore, these freed slaves were often elderly and physically incapable of benefitting from the liberties that came with legal freedom. Second, voluntary manumission often involved several conditions before the enslaved could attain complete liberty. Some of these conditions included living in the slaveholder's home and raising their children, caring for the slaveholder for a specified period of time, providing service to the Church, or serving out an apprenticeship.[64] The state of conditional freedom upon an owner's death often led to a precarious future for the enslaved. In writing their wills and testaments, slaveholders sometimes served the interests of the enslaved, but inheritors often violated wills and testaments, and they either forced slaves to purchase their freedom or they subjected them to years of conditional servitude.[65] These methods of freeing slaves were not unique to Antequera. Manumission in Brazil, for example, took a similar form and young, creole women most often benefitted from conditional freedom.[66]

The challenges of attaining full liberty in this period are confirmed by the significantly lower number of freed slaves and by the perpetuity of conditional freedom.[67] Only 351 manumission letters were processed between 1680 and 1730. Of these 351 manumission letters, 172 individuals gained legal freedom from 1680 to 1699, and another 170 people acquired

---

[64] Ibid., 276-277.

[65] Catherine Komisaruk, *Labor and Love in Guatemala: The Eve of Independence* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 83

[66] Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna, *Slavery in Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 254.

[67] The small number of manumission letters is in comparison to approximately 2,000 slave sales processed in Antequera between 1680 and 1730.

liberty in the first three decades of the eighteenth century.[68] This data suggests that while a constant number of bondsmen and bondswomen attained legal freedom in this period, Spanish elites in Antequera still relied on slavery as a system of labor because nearly six times as many slaves were sold as those who attained liberty in the same period. Likewise, conditional freedom prohibited freed slaves from enjoying full liberty. Those who obtained conditional freedom were often contracted for months or even years to pay off the debt of their legal freedom. Hence, while the number of manumission letters processed in Antequera was minimal during the colonial era, payment obligations increased drastically, keeping slaves bound to their former owners as collateral for other labor or financial contracts. Similar processes occurred in other parts of New Spain and Brazil. For instance, manumission was a rare occurrence in seventeenth-century Puebla because slaves were forced into a state of limbo between conditional freedom, structured apprenticeships, and service contracts.[69] Likewise, slaves in nineteenth-century Brazil faced uncertain circumstances with conditional freedom that involved continued service, special work, and payment through installments.[70] Therefore, conditional freedom was a mechanism that kept men and women in a state of enslavement in Spanish America and Brazil.

Self-purchase was another common avenue to legal freedom. This method was either related to or independent from voluntary manumission. Slaves in Spanish America often purchased their freedom with personal earnings. In Peru, for instance, self-purchase with earnings, gift money, and loans were more important than voluntary manumission to increasing

[68] See AHNO, PN, manumission letters processed by Diego Benaias, Francisco de Quero, Diego Diaz Romero, Joseph Alvarez de Aragon, Joseph de Arauxo, and Luis de Ybarra.

[69] Pablo M. Sierra, "Urban Slavery in Colonial Puebla De Los Ángeles, 1536-1708" (doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2013), 134.

[70] Klein and Luna, 259.

the free colored population.[71] Self-purchase arrangements were typically individualistic, often involving the judicial system. In some cases, bondsmen and bondswomen enabled slaveholders to recover their initial investment by paying them the slave's original purchase price. In other cases, slave owners and the enslaved agreed on the slave's worth, obtained an appraisal from a third party, and then the slaveholder settled to sell the individual for the appraised value. Although slaves generally purchased manumission with earnings, they also borrowed money from godparents and relatives, or they relied on donations. Occasionally, slaveholders permitted the enslaved to save their own money. For example, enslaved shopkeepers and artisans separated part of their daily wages for liberation. Similarly, apprentice contracts benefitted both slaveholders and the enslaved.[72] Through this process, slaveholders increased the value of their slaves through an apprenticeship, and young male slaves learned a particular trade. Upon obtaining legal freedom, apprentices also increased their daily wages significantly.

Bondswomen and bondsmen often turned to family members and their community for help to obtain their legal freedom. Male and female slaves often asked free mulatos to liberate adult relatives, so that those freed slaves could earn funds to free their children later. Alternatively, enslaved parents preferred to liberate their offspring, so that they would not continue to suffer in captivity.[73] This reliance on relatives was such a common practice in colonial Guatemala that the term *rescate* often appears in the historical record as a means to describe manumission by kin.[74] This term does not appear in notarial records from New Spain,

[71] Bowser, 278-279.

[72] Ibid., 279-282.

[73] Ibid., 282.

[74] Komisaruk, 87.

but evidence from Antequera reveals instances when parents, spouses, or other kin paid for manumission on behalf of the enslaved. Antequera's notarial records also show that slaves borrowed money from relatives to obtain their legal freedom. Francisca Xaviera Alvarez, for example, was a seventeen-year-old mulata whose husband helped her obtain legal freedom from her slaveholder. Francisca's mother, Antonia Canseco, had been freed on the condition that her daughter would remain enslaved to Gabriel Alvarez. However, by September 1731, Francisca sought legal freedom with the assistance of her husband, who paid 250 pesos for her liberty.[75] Her husband's status as a mestizo likely helped Francisca to obtain freedom and to adjust to life as a freed mulata, because intermarriage was an indirect but effective path to legal freedom. The rate of intermarriage increased steadily during the first half of the eighteenth century; for African descendants, intermarriage was a means to avoid paying tribute and potentially attaining upward mobility. As a mestizo, Pedro's identity was more fluid than that of Francisca. He was likely able to navigate colonial spaces as a mestizo, or maybe even as a Spaniard, and thus his social and economic capital benefitted Francisca in her path to freedom.[76]

María Manuela de la O. is another enslaved woman who sought assistance to obtain her legal freedom. María was a nineteen-year-old mulata blanca enslaved to Doña Juana de Ojeda, who refused to grant María her liberty, even when offered payment for self-purchase. In January 1734, María's father, Faustino de Carbajal, a free *pardo,* turned to the judicial system and filed a suit against Juana de Ojeda because María had repeatedly requested her freedom and her owner refused on every occasion. In the legal proceedings, Faustino indicated that he had already

[75] AHNO, PN, Joseph Manuel Alvarez de Aragon, vol. 44, fs. 553-554v.

[76] Patricia Seed, "Social Dimensions of Race: Mexico City, 1753" *Hispanic American Historical Review* 62, no. 4 (1982): 601. Patricia seed argues that *mestizos* held the greatest level of fluidity of social status in New Spain.

appraised his daughter to give the slaveholder a fair price for the enslaved, but she still resisted. Using the language from the *Siete Partidas,* María's father insisted that it was his daughter's "natural right" to be free, and local authorities concurred by stating that:

> …of all rights that favor freedom as provided by the natural [right] and then introduced by the people, there is no law or statue that prohibits…and according to the compulsion to the masters…and with greater reason should be compelled to those who resist to give freedom...[77]

As the *Siete Partidas* suggests, Spanish colonial government and jurisprudence theoretically favored freedom as a natural right, but it also understood the necessity of the institution of slavery. In this case, the local authorities in Antequera declared that the slaveholders could not prohibit bondswomen and bondsmen from seeking freedom; instead, slaveholders were urged to liberate those in captivity. The authorities in Antequera took several measures to compel Juana de Ojeda to grant María her freedom. First, the local judge suggested that the case should be turned over to the Real Audiencia, and then the local mayor followed through with proceedings in Oaxaca.[78] Afterward, the mayor requested multiple appraisals of María before declaring that she should be emancipated for 200 pesos.[79] Despite this final verdict, María's owner insisted that this bondswoman was worth more than double the appraisal, which prolonged María's path to liberty for at least a month. After much resistance from her slaveholder, María finally obtained her legal freedom on February 6, 1734.[80]

---

[77] AHNO, PN, Manuel Francisco de Rueda, vol. 484, ff. 2v.

[78] The Real Audiencia often heard appeals from cases that were originally handled by justices of local courts.

[79] AHNO, Manuel Francisco de Rueda, vol. 484, fs. 1-13.

[80] AHNO, Manuel Francisco de Rueda, vol. 483, fs. 10v-14.

Although this civil case is more indicative of the power and status of María's father and her slaveholder, the record also informs us of the obstacles that enslaved people faced in obtaining legal freedom. The case also sheds light on the many liberties that free African-descent people experienced in Antequera. The context of this case deserves more attention because the abundance of manumission letters processed in the early eighteenth century suggest that most enslaved people in Antequera had already acquired some freedom by the 1730s.[81] And in this case, María's status as a mulata blanca had no bearing on her access to legal freedom. María repeatedly solicited manumission with little success, and her condition of enslavement remained unchanged until her father intervened and demanded his daughter's legal freedom. In other words, despite the prevalence of manumission in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, many enslaved people remained in captivity until the late eighteenth century, and they faced considerable resistance from slaveholders who were often unwilling to emancipate the enslaved. As a free pardo, María's father not only used Spanish colonial legal institutions to free his daughter from captivity, but he also had the financial means to do so. Hence, free high-ranking people of African descent had both the economic and social capital for mobility in Antequera.

Enslaved women generally attained manumission more often than men, but they also suffered from greater vulnerability to violence. In Guatemala, for example, enslaved parents usually freed themselves before their children because they hoped to earn more money for their families through wage labor.[82] Scholars have found three reasons for the prevalence of

[81] Oaxaca City's notarial archive only has 137 manumission letters that were processed between 1731 and 1829. When compared to the 351 manumission letters from 1680 to 1730, the data suggests that a higher number of bondsmen and bondswomen obtained liberty between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries. Still, these records are inconsistent with the number of slave sales processed in Antequera during this time, and thus, it is likely that slaves remained in captivity, possibly under conditional freedom, until the late eighteenth century.

[82] Komisaruk, 88-90.

emancipated women and children in Latin America: first, the lower market value of women and children suggests that urban female slaves could purchase their legal freedom sooner than bondsmen. Second, familial patterns in manumission suggest that freed women would eventually lead to freeborn children. Third, some historians argue that women's domestic labor created greater opportunities for interactions with slaveholders, which would ultimately increase an individual's odds to attain legal freedom.[83] This paternalistic view of gendered client-patron relations implies that enslaved women's sexuality played a critical role in paths to liberty. On the contrary, bondswomen often sued male slaveholders over sexual violence and exploitation. Moreover, enslaved women demanded compensation or reparations through manumission because they claimed that they were coerced into sexual relationships with male slave owners and promised freedom.[84] Catherine Komisaruk argues that this form of mistreatment led to a distinct path to freedom for women because they exchanged sexual "consent" for the possibility of freedom, and thus were able to manipulate the judicial system. Ultimately, enslaved women who brokered manumission through sex faced increased vulnerability to exploitation because, although domestic labor involved contact with male slaveholders, working in households also made slave women susceptible to mistreatment, punishment, and violence from male slaveholders.[85]

In addition to exposure to violence from slaveholders, enslaved women in Antequera were also vulnerable to assault from any man. Josepha Juachina de la Encarnación, for instance,

---

[83] Frank T. Proctor, "Gender and Manumission of Slaves in New Spain," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 86, no. 2 (2006): 313.

[84] Komisaruk, 92-93.

[85] Ibid., 94-95.

was subjected to physical and sexual violence while she worked as a slave in Jalatlaco. On February 12, 1746, Josepha reported to local authorities that she was raped and robbed. In her testimony, Josepha wrote that she had walked down to the Atoyac River in Jalatlaco to wash clothing for her owner, Thereza de Reyna and suddenly:

> Two men arrived whom I did not know and one of them hugged me from behind and threw me to the ground, and although he threatened to rape me, he was not able to until he took out a knife and put it on my breasts and scratched them and he continued in his depraved intention even with violence and force and he mistreated me so much that until this day I am injured and healing myself of the blows he gave me, he did as he wished…he robbed me of some tablecloths…[86]

Josepha's words show that bondswomen were vulnerable to violence and mistreatment from any man in Antequera. In this, case two men, including a Frenchman, assaulted her. Josepha's statement was corroborated by a child named Antonio de Santillan, who witnessed the incident of rape and robbery while he bathed in the river. Antonio confirmed the identity of one of the two men as a *morisco* named Joseph Manuel Genes. Josepha demanded justice, insisting on the imprisonment of Joseph and the other man who raped her. In the end, a Frenchman named Juan Yuber Arances was found guilty of physically and sexually attacking Josepha. He was imprisoned by the Corregidor of Oaxaca, but in April of 1747, he was sent to Veracruz to be transported to the Casa de la Contratación because he had been living in New Spain without a license for travel. This type of violent attack could have been perpetrated by slaveholders, overseers, or even bondsmen. For this reason, bondswomen faced increased vulnerability to mistreatment and violence in captivity, both in domestic and public spaces. Thus, enslaved women who worked in domestic service were exposed to violence and, in fact, they were more

[86] Archivo General del Poder Ejecutivo del Estado de Oaxaca (AGPEO), Alcaldías Mayores, leg. 24, exp. 12, fs. 1-2r.

vulnerable to violence because of their increased contact with male slaveholders and with the general male population in Antequera.

The Spanish colonial state designed multiple measures to maintain the social order and prohibit resistance from enslaved women and men. In the early period, colonial authorities passed legislation that intimidated and punished enslaved men and women. In 1536, for example, the viceroy passed a law that penalized Africans with 100 lashes for the mistreatment of Indians, and in 1552 he prohibited free and enslaved African-descended people from carrying arms.[87] These preventive and punitive laws would eventually prove to be useless because runaway slaves became a persistent problem for the colonial state. As early as 1525, for instance, the cabildo of Mexico City required slaveholders to pay the captors of their runaway slaves. And any slaveholder who failed to claim his slave within three days would run the risk of having his slave sold to someone else. By the 1540s, there were dozens of reports of *cimarrones* staging guerrilla attacks and raids along colonial roads and on slaveholders' properties.[88] The Spanish colonial state responded to this civil unrest with even more punitive legislation. In 1571, the viceroy focused on deterring and punishing offenders with lashes. He declared that any enslaved person who was absent for four days would receive 50 lashes, and an absence of eight days merited a punishment of 100 lashes. If bondsmen and bondswomen removed their shackles, they would receive 200 lashes, and they would be required to wear chains for another four months. Therefore, as slave flight increased and confrontations between Spaniards and cimarrones intensified, the policing of enslaved people intensified, and colonial authorities concentrated on

[87] Palmer, 121.

[88] Ibid., 123.

creating incentives for slave captors and cimarrones who limited the spread of maroon communities in Veracruz and Oaxaca.[89]

Slave flight was a common strategy to obtain extralegal freedom in Oaxaca. Reports of slave flight are less common than manumission records in the archive, but the documents that do exist reveal an interesting connection between Antequera and Santiago de Guatemala. Nearly all these reports show that bondsmen and bondswomen in Antequera and its surrounding regions fled to Guatemala, a fact which alters our understanding of Antequera's relationship with the viceregal capital of Mexico City and the Kingdom of Guatemala. When slaves fled, they knew well enough to move in the opposite direction of the viceregal capital, toward the frontier.

Fugitive slaves rarely returned to their slaveholders in Oaxaca, except on their own terms. These individuals often built new lives as free persons in their new places of residence.[90] Esteban de los Ángeles, for instance, fled the San Joseph plantation in the direction of Antequera, and he reported that his shackles miraculously fell off after he walked the distance of two leagues. He voluntarily returned to the plantation after he had reconciled matters with his owner.[91] However, Esteban was most likely forced to return to San Joseph because he did not have the economic capital or social networks to enable him to move to a distant region. In contrast, Manuel traveled to Chiapas, and he refused to return to his slaveholder in Antequera. Manuel was an enslaved mulato who worked for María Viera de la Cueva in the 1690s. He was born into slavery in Antequera and remained in captivity with his mother for several years. In 1699, however, María asked Juan Martinez de Ubeda to search for Manuel because she heard that he was servicing friar

[89] Ibid., 124-125.

[90] Komisaruk, 85.

[91] AGN, Inquisición, vol. 735, exp. 4, ff. 22.

Juan Arias in the convent of Santo Domingo in Chiapas. María's power of attorney provided specific details about Manuel, describing him as a twenty-year-old "ginger" mulato blanco who fled from her property in 1697. Thus, over the course of two years, Manuel escaped captivity from María, traveled to Chiapas, and became enslaved to the convent of Santo Domingo in Chiapas. By the time María wrote her power of attorney, she no longer wanted Manuel, and instead, she wanted to sell Manuel to whoever would purchase him.[92] It is possible that Manuel never returned to his slaveholder in Antequera because the distance was too far to travel or because he received better treatment in Santo Domingo. Esteban, on the other hand, worked on the outskirts of the city and it is likely that he did not have the means to travel greater distances. Still, his willingness to return suggests that he negotiated with his slaveholder. Esteban only returned to the plantation after he had agreed to fair treatment with his slave owner; and yet, as Esteban complained, the mayordomo continued to mistreat him after he returned to the plantation.

Most of these runaway slaves traveled even further south to Guatemala. Domingo Soriano, for example, disappeared from Antequera for two years. Similar to Manuel, Domingo was born and enslaved in Antequera, and at sixteen years of age, he fled from his owner's home in the city. After Domingo was gone for two years, in 1699, his former owners asked a notary to search for Domingo while he traveled to Guatemala because they had heard that Domingo was living there.[93] Another case involving Joseph de Canseco reveals a runaway slave's long pursuit of extralegal freedom. Joseph first appeared in the historical record when his former owner searched for him in the province of Alvarado, near Veracruz, in 1694. At that time, Joseph's

[92] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 152, ff. 260.

[93] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 152, ff. 664.

former slaveholder had been searching for him for three years and eleven months with little success. In his attempt to find Joseph, the slaveholder described him as a twenty-three-year-old mulato who was short and heavy, he had a mark on his lip, and he was missing two teeth because he was injured by a horse.[94] After another two years, Joseph's former owner continued to search for him, but this time, he was notified that Joseph was imprisoned in the public jail in Santiago de Guatemala.[95] Joseph's former slaveholder insisted that he wanted his slave returned to Antequera because, by that point, Joseph had been a fugitive slave for over five years. By 1700, Joseph's former owner was certain that he had been living in Santiago de Guatemala as a free man. And yet, he continued to pursue Joseph's return, so he contracted a muleteer named Antonio de Otalora to search for Joseph in Guatemala. By this time, Joseph was thirty-three years old, married with two children, and he had become a maestro of masonry in Santiago de Guatemala. After a nine-year search, Joseph's former owner had given up on the possibility that Joseph could be returned and, instead, just wanted him sold in Guatemala so that he could recover the cost of the enslaved.[96]

Enslaved women only fled from slaveholders in rare circumstances because there was more at stake for women, especially if they had children. Moreover, there were few female runaways because they were subjected to violence from slaveholders and even more vulnerable to sexual violence as runaways. In many cases, enslaved women only resorted to flight after multiple episodes of intolerable mistreatment.[97] Based on my sample of archival records from

[94] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 149, ff. 407v.

[95] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 150, ff. 440v.

[96] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 153, ff. 376v.

[97] Komisaruk, 85.

colonial Oaxaca, only two women appeared as fugitive slaves. Margarita de la Cruz and her husband, for example, fled from Mexico City in 1716. Together, they escaped from a religious cleric's home and traveled toward Antequera but were never found.[98] I found only one case of an enslaved woman who escaped from captivity on her own. Juana Baptista was an enslaved mulata who fled from her owner's home in Antequera in 1737. And even in this case, Juana had written a letter to other religious officials, expressing her discontent and desire to find her son in Jacaltenango, Guatemala.[99]

Sometimes, free family members of runaway slaves searched for and attempted to find better conditions for their enslaved relatives. For instance, in November 1694, Graviel Gonzáles and his two sons, Antonio and Andrés, fled from a plantation in Santa Ana Zegache, in the jurisdiction of the Marquesado. A month later, Graviel's brother, Joseph Gonzales relied on his social networks and asked Mathias Hernándes to search for the three runaway slaves. Mathias was a free *mulato* who was also a personal servant on the plantation owned by a Spaniard named Diego de Torres Chincoa. In Joseph's power of attorney, he noted that he heard that his brother and his two nephews were walking to the Kingdom of Guatemala. Joseph must have been worried about his family members because he mentioned that they were exposed to the dangers of the road and that they would likely get lost. As young men, Joseph was concerned that his nephews were at risk of committing crimes, and thus he preferred that they return home. [100] For this reason, Joseph sent Mathias to find the young men along the roads leading to Guatemala. In another case, a black slave named Miguel Joseph was imprisoned in Antequera because he had

[98] AHNO, PN, Joseph de Arauxo, vol. 113, ff. 16.

[99] AHNO, PN, Joseph Manuel Alvarez de Aragón, vol. 53, ff. 372v-373v.

[100] AHNO, PN, Francisco de Quero, vol. 430, ff. 240.

fled from his owner in 1750. While Miguel was in the city jail, his former owner, Juan Baptista Lizardi, insisted that he no longer wanted the enslaved man, and instead preferred to sell him to any buyer. At that point, Miguel's sister, Francisca Romana and her husband, Juan Pablo, sought to find a new owner for their brother.[101] Although Francisca was a free black woman and her husband was a mulato mason, they were likely unable to afford both Miguel's legal freedom and fees for capture and imprisonment. For this reason, they found a buyer who was a priest in Antequera's cathedral in the hopes that Miguel would receive fair treatment.

The narratives of enslaved men reveal the movement of people between Antequera and Santiago de Guatemala. Graviel and two sons, for example, could have fled to larger urban centers such as Mexico City and Puebla, but their choice to travel to Guatemala suggests that they knew to move away from the viceregal capital where power and Spaniards were concentrated, and to get away from Oaxaca. Clearly, these men sought to establish a new beginning as free men in the Kingdom of Guatemala. Similarly, Domingo Soriano's flight to Guatemala and his eventual settlement there reveal two important possibilities for enslaved people moving to Guatemala. Slaves in Antequera and its environs must have forged ties with free colored persons in Guatemala through commercial and social networks that connected the two regions. It is unlikely that enslaved men would have simply wandered off to Guatemala, thinking that they could always return to Oaxaca, just as Esteban de los Ángeles returned to the San Joseph plantation. Instead, I argue that enslaved people travelled along this ancient route, the same route by which Guatemalan commodities of indigo and cacao were transported to Oaxaca, and that slaves used commercial networks to exploit opportunities for extralegal freedom in Guatemala.

[101] AHNO, PN, Manuel Francisco de Rueda, vol. 506, ff. 33.

As a strategy for liberation, slave flight affected slaveholders, but it did not dismantle the institution of slavery in New Spain. Unlike the rise of maroon communities and uprisings in seventeenth-century Brazil, the enslaved people in Oaxaca generally sought out personal freedom through slave flight. I have found only one case in the record in which this strategy involved arms.[102] In 1731, Lorenzo Ramos de Poveda filed a power of attorney in search of his runaway slave and the goods that he took with him. He sent Juan Geraldino on a search mission, asking him to find his mulato slave named Mariano:

> …His mother lives in San Agustín de Cuevas. He fled with a mule saddle, a shotgun, a pistol, my good chair, a silver bowl, and walking sticks…he must have sold it all…if you can find out who he sold it to, and take it from them because he is a slave…[103]

Free and enslaved colored persons were still prohibited from bearing arms in the eighteenth century, but Mariano managed to escape from his slaveholder with a shotgun and a pistol. It is possible that Mariano was headed to Mexico City because he sold a couple of items in Puebla. It is also possible that Mariano took the pistol and the shotgun as a form of protection, and he likely stole the other goods to secure funds for his journey. However, Mariano's actions were likely a form of resistance against his slaveholder because he ultimately sold the chair and bowl to a cartwright, he sold the pistol in Tehuacán, and he sold several other goods for one peso in Puebla.[104] In sum, many acts of slave resistance in Antequera and its environs were direct attacks on slaveholders. Instead of trying to break down the institution of slavery, which was already in

[102] I compare the case of slave resistance in New Spain to the maroon community of Quilombo de Palmares. Slave resistance of this scale did not exist in New Spain, with the exception of the maroon colony led by Gaspar Yanga, who negotiated with colonial officials to establish the autonomous settlement of San Lorenzo de los Negros.

[103] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 5867, exp. 85, fs. 1-1v.

[104] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, box 5867, exp. 85, ff. 2.

decline in the late eighteenth century, enslaved people in Antequera liberated themselves through manumission, and they found extralegal freedoms through slave flight, a refusal to perform harsh labor, and through litigation.

Conclusion

In many ways, the lives of enslaved people in Antequera resembled that of bondsmen and bondswomen in other parts of Spanish America and Brazil. These individuals endured capture in West and West Central Africa, or they were born into slavery in the Americas, and they endured urban and rural captivity in Antequera and its surrounding regions. Their condition of enslavement was shaped by the Spanish colonial state and slaveholders, which ultimately defined the type of labor enslaved people were forced to perform. In urban settings, this coerced labor included personal and domestic service, as well as fabrication of goods, gardening, and construction. In rural areas, bondsmen and bondswomen toiled in the colony's haciendas, plantations, and silver mines.

Nevertheless, neither the institution of slavery nor slaveholders were able to completely define the public and private lives of enslaved people in Antequera. Instead, bondswomen and bondsmen challenged the harsh labor, ill-treatment, and violence that they faced from slaveholders. For instance, bondsmen such as Esteban de los Ángeles conceptualized their understanding of fair treatment, and in turn challenged harsh labor requirements by refusing to work, engaging in illicit acts, and using litigation to call into question the practices of slaveholders and overseers on plantations. Others demonstrated enslaved subjectivities and found extralegal freedoms through slave flight, everyday interactions with ethnic others, and through writing. The behavior of Miguel de la Flor, for example, shows how enslaved men and women

capitalized on their knowledge and forged social networks with individuals at all levels of the social hierarchy. Miguel not only reflected upon life in Antequera, but he also articulated his frustrations with captivity. In addition to Miguel's behavior, his writings helped define the variety of experiences in slavery in Oaxaca. In other words, not all slaves in Oaxaca were illiterate or confined to manual labor. Just as experiences in captivity varied widely, the paths to legal freedom differed greatly, too. The vast majority of enslaved women and men were forced into conditional freedom, but these individuals also used litigation, and they relied on kin and community members to attain full liberty through self-purchase.

Enslaved women and men ultimately shaped master-slave relations in both private settings, such as the homes and plantations of Spanish elites, and in public spaces, including legal and religious settings. This interplay between slaveholders and the enslaved led to both social and political changes in the colony. Legal documents such as the *Siete Partidas* created a loose framework for understanding master-slave relations, but as confrontations intensified between Spanish elites and runaway slaves, the Spanish colonial state designed new legislation as vehicles for social control. Likewise, the increasing number of class and race-based uprisings in urban and rural areas forced the viceroy to respond with punitive forms of legislation. Therefore, just as colonial legislation and slaveholders impinged on the lives of enslaved people in Antequera, the actions of bondsmen and bondswomen also shaped their experiences and slaveholders, and their efforts had important implications for Spanish colonial law in New Spain.

CHAPTER 4

Fluid Categories of *Casta* in Antequera, 1660-1792

This chapter examines the social position and lives of African descent people in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Antequera. As a Spanish colonial city, Antequera's organization and social hierarchies resembled that of other cities in New Spain. However, the city's location, size, and multi-ethnic dynamic also facilitated cross-cultural contact. These inter-ethnic interactions likely affected marriage patterns, the interplay between colonial subjects and colonial institutions, and everyday life in the city. In this chapter, I evaluate both social status and the utility of racial classifications in a growing multi-ethnic society. I also analyze the everyday lives of free coloreds living and working in the city. Thus, I examine self-fashioning among free coloreds, their negotiations with colonial institutions, and their interactions with ethnic others through quantitative records, and notarial and judicial data. In short, my research asks, *what did it mean to be a free person of African descent in colonial Oaxaca?* I argue that free coloreds faced many limitations to their rights, privileges, and movement in the colony. In response to the Spanish colonial states' mechanisms of social control, free pardos and mulatos found ways to define their social status and experiences in this colonial city. Therefore, elite constructions of race defined their social status in official records, but free coloreds' subjectivities reveal that they strategically rejected, redefined, or practiced their Diaspora identities based on their individual understanding of casta.

Antequera's multi-ethnic society was a rather unique setting where social status was a fluid concept that depended on ethnic, social, and circumstantial aspects. These factors included: 1) an individual's ethnicity, occupation, and access to political power; 2) their ties or capacity to

forge connections with ethnic "others,"; 3) property ownership; 4) and their use of social, economic, and political strategies to manipulate colonial structures, and contest elite constructions of race. As a result, African descent people in Antequera employed various strategies to protect and even renegotiate their place within the existing social hierarchies. Their actions show that African descendants understood their casta, specifically through their ability to meet colonial expectations, or by contesting the social order and ultimately changing the meanings of colonial categories.[1]

Social Status of Free African Descent People

Social status in eighteenth-century New Spain was based on both race and class. The sistema de castas created categories of distinction that established social divisions according to ethnicity. Since the early colonial period, this stratification situated Spaniards at the top of the social ladder, with mestizos below them, and people of indigenous and African descent at the bottom of the pyramid. As an elite construction of race, this social hierarchy was a mechanism of social control that privileged people of European descent. In other words, these categories of difference simultaneously favored Spaniards and established the rights and limitations for non-European colonial subjects. In addition, casta populations, including African descent people, were often restricted from certain occupations, hindering their opportunities for upward social mobility. Thus, Peninsular Spaniards remained at the top of the racial and economic hierarchies,

[1] See O'Toole, *Bound Lives.* O'Toole's use of notarial, judicial, and ecclesiastical records to analyze the processes of exclusion and social interaction of indigenous peoples and Africans reveal that these groups understood their legal *casta* in colonial Peru. Her use of legal records also problematizes our understanding of the interplay between colonial legislation and colonial subjects' everyday lives. Moreover, her analysis destabilizes the fixed notions of *casta* by revealing that Africans and their descendants understood their interactions with the Spanish colonial state, and they used legal claims to negotiate their position in the colony's social hierarchies.

and free and enslaved people continued to be at the bottom of the social ladder. As the casta population grew in the seventeenth century, this relatively rigid caste system expanded to include a wide range of racial categories with discernable social and legislative status that were tied to them. Through the process of mestizaje, the three basic groups of Spaniard, African, and Indian quickly evolved into a complex nomenclature of colonial categories that intertwined ethnicity with socioeconomic status.

Casta categories were often expressed in racial terms, but they were also a reflection of an individual's overall reputation. For instance, a person's *calidad* accounted for their occupation, wealth, purity of blood, integrity, and even skin color.[2] Moreover, the importance of these different facets of calidad changed over the course of the colonial period. In Antequera, for instance, status in the city's social hierarchy was closely tied to both race and property ownership in the late 1600s. For this reason, wealth in Antequera and the broader Valley of Oaxaca was concentrated among a small group of Spanish elites. By the late eighteenth century, however, social status in Antequera was connected to several factors, including an individual's occupation, property ownership, access to political power, and race.[3]

Under Spanish colonial law and the sistema de castas, free-coloreds faced limited rights in Spanish colonial society. Unlike their mestizo counterparts, free-persons of African descent were required to pay tribute to the Spanish crown. They were also forced to make themselves available to Spanish landowners to live and work on their properties as wage laborers. Free coloreds faced restrictions in occupations and education as well. They could not hold public

[2] Robert McCaa, "Calidad, Clase, and Marriage in Colonial Mexico: The Case of Parral, 1788-90," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 64, no. 3 (1984): 477-478.

[3] John Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), 194-195.

office, and they were barred from attending university.[4] Furthermore, restrictive legislation forbade free coloreds from bearing arms. The penalty for such an offense would be the loss of the weapons, imprisonment, or even 100 lashes.[5] Likewise, the Spanish colonial state controlled the movement and public lives of free and enslaved people in the colony. Spanish colonial law, for instance, prohibited free coloreds from wandering the streets at night, and women were barred from wearing status symbols such as lavish silks, gold, and pearls. The Spanish colonial state also limited religious congregations among free coloreds to small groups, and they were often banned from burying their dead near important cathedrals. Finally, Spanish colonial legislation did not control marriage selection of colonial subjects in the same manner as in British North America, but the Spanish monarchy had social and legal influence that discouraged exogamous marriage among free and enslaved people of African descent. Collectively, these laws deprived African descent people of the same rights that were granted to other colonial subjects and portrayed them as threats to the colonial state.

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are a critical period to examine the construction of race because of the social changes that occurred in New Spain. By 1670, the native populations had recovered from a series of epidemics, and the casta population of mulatos, mestizos, moriscos, and pardo*s* grew significantly. Thus, the prevalence of inter-ethnic formal and informal unions led to drastic population growth throughout the colony. In Antequera, for example, the overall population increased from 3,000 inhabitants in 1643 to approximately 6,000

[4] Ben Vinson III, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 3.

[5] Colin Palmer, *Slaves of the White God, Blacks in Mexico 1570-1650* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 121.

people by 1699.[6] Similarly, Antequera's social structure expanded to include clearly defined socioracial categories during the seventeenth century. The sistema de castas covered a wide range of categories in Spanish America. As indicated in Table 4.1, the eight common classifications that generally appear in Antequera's historical record are: *español europeo* (peninsular Spaniard), *español* (creole Spaniard), *castizo* (offspring of mixed Spanish and mestizo descent), *mestizo* (of mixed Spanish and Indian descent), *mulato* (of mixed Spanish and African descent), *negro* (of African descent), and *indio* (of indigenous descent).[7] In addition to these common classifications, several other terms appear in Antequera's archival documents that were specific to free and enslaved people: *morisco*, *mulato libre, mulato esclavo, negro libre, negro esclavo, mulato blanco, mulato prieto,* and *de color pardo.*[8] A person's *calidad* also incorporated color, as indicated by the color associations of *mulato blanco* (light-skinned *mulato*), *mulato prieto* (dark-skinned *mulato*), and *de color pardo* (of brown color). However, the category of *pardo* also signified a higher social status than that of a *mulato.* These categories appeared throughout Spanish America and often helped define the rights and obligations of colonial subjects who belonged to these categories.

[6] Chance, 105.

[7] Ibid., 126.

[8] African captives were also categorized based on their point of embarkation with classifications such as: *de nación Congo, de nación Angola, de nación Mozambique, casta rosada, casta cafre, casta arará, bran,* and *mina.*

Table 4.1: Racial Classifications in Seventeenth-Century Antequera

español europeo	Peninsular Spaniard	*mulato prieto*	Dark-skinned mulato
español	Creole Spaniard	*mulato blanco*	Light-skinned mulato
castizo	Spaniard + mestizo	*de color pardo*	Brown colored
mestizo	Spaniard + Indian	*mulato libre*	Free mulato
morisco	Spaniard + mulato	*mulato esclavo*	Mulato slave
pardo	High-ranking mulato	*negro*	Black person
mulato	Spaniard + African	*negro libre*	Free black person
indio	Indian	*negro esclavo*	Black slave

These racial categories did not completely define the lives of colonial subjects, and several ethnic groups, including mestizos and mulatos, were able to secure or negotiate their social status within the colony's social hierarchies. Mestizos and mulatos, for instance, were known to use marriage as a tool for social mobility for their own benefit and that of their offspring. Free pardos and mulatos also turned to the militia to create opportunities, privileges, and advancement for themselves and their families.[9] At the same time, some African descent people relied on religious and secular social networks to secure their position in the social hierarchy. As scholars have recently noted, mixed-race populations, as well as other ethnic groups, often defined their casta on their own terms, especially during the late colonial period.[10]

[9] Vinson, 2.

[10] See O'Toole, *Bound Lives;* Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*; Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion*; Vinson, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty*.

Despite the growing categorization of people and the punitive legislation against free coloreds and slaves, the fluidity of Spanish American hierarchies created spaces for people of various ethnicities to adopt, reject, or strategically negotiate their position in local societies. For African descent people, specifically, this tricky process involved understanding secular and religious institutions, interacting with ethnic others, and maintaining strong ties within their ethnic groups. In spite of the limitations that likely shaped the daily lives of free-persons of African descent, these individuals still defined their own lives because many of the caste restrictions, such as the right to carry arms, were inconsistently enforced, which made room for these individuals to capitalize on freedoms that were not officially available to them.

In Peru, for instance, free coloreds asserted their identity through their use of casta terms, choice of marriage partners, and their association with religious organizations. Rachel O'Toole's analysis of casta construction in colonial Peru reveals that free coloreds, such as Ana de la Calle, self-identified as free *morenos* and *morenas* of *casta lucumí.* Hence, Ana labeled herself as a free woman of color from Yorubaland in the interior of the Bight of Benin.[11] In the Peruvian context, the colonial terms of moreno and morena were generally used to distinguish free people of color from enslaved women and men. In addition, free coloreds often used property ownership as a means to separate themselves from enslaved people. Ana's 1719 will, for example, shows that her social networks and patron-client relations helped her establish and maintain her role among the free-colored population of Trujillo, Peru. First, she buried her first husband in a Franciscan monastery. Second, Ana brokered a second marriage with another free *moreno* who served one of the wealthiest Spanish sugar estate owners in the region. Third, Ana was a property owner

[11] Rachel Sarah O'Toole, "To Be Free and Lucumí: Ana de la Calle and Making African Diaspora Identities in Colonial Peru," in *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora*, eds. Sherwin K. Bryant, Rachel Sarah O'Toole, and Ben Vinson III (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 73.

herself, and her daughter married an individual with the title of "lieutenant." Finally, Ana and her family members also claimed titles of respect. In her will, Ana labeled herself and her husband as morenos, and she identified her daughter as a parda or high-ranking person of African descent.[12] Similarly, free coloreds throughout mainland Spanish America self-identified as pardo/a in the historical record even though they were often labeled as free mulatos/as by secular and religious officials. At the same time, Ana self-identified as a free morena of casta lucumí, which suggests that free coloreds were able to express or disavow notions of blackness or even African identities in various contexts. In this case, O'Toole argues that just as Ana separated herself from enslaved people with the title of morena, she likely self-identified as lucumí to associate herself with the multiple meanings of superior status that came along with the noble language of Yoruba in West Africa.

Although the statuses and identities of moreno and casta lucumí were relatively uncommon in New Spain, the free and enslaved populations still asserted their own Diaspora identities in religious and legal settings.[13] Marriage registers from Mexico City show that free coloreds followed endogamous marital patterns during the seventeenth century.[14] As Herman Bennett argues, creoles, and especially free coloreds, often internalized negative perceptions of blackness that stemmed from elite constructions of race.[15] Creoles, therefore, rarely married

[12] Ibid., 79-80.

[13] The term lucumí does not appear in records from New Spain. The category of moreno, however, appears sporadically in other parts of the colony, but it rarely ever appears in Antequera's historical record.

[14] Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico, 1660-1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 81-83.

[15] Frank Proctor, "African Diasporic Ethnicity in Mexico City to 1650," in *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora,* ed. Sherwin K. Bryant, Rachel Sarah O'Toole and Ben Vinson III (Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 55.

African captives and instead, male creoles sought out marriage partners among other free coloreds and ethnic others.[16] This spousal selection shows that free coloreds sought to improve their own status, as well as that of their offspring. These individuals articulated their statuses in the Spanish colonial courts, as well. For example, free coloreds occasionally self-identified as pardos or high-ranking persons of African descent in legal proceedings. Furthermore, Frank Proctor contends that recent African arrivals used marriage to create new African diasporic ethnicities that were articulated in the process of the Diaspora and were based on re-definitions of common linguistic and cultural traits that originated in West Africa and West Central Africa.[17] This data suggests that free coloreds used marriage as a tool for social mobility and to distinguish themselves from enslaved people. In a similar manner, recent African arrivals also relied on formal unions as a means to develop social networks in the colony.

This negotiation of colonial categorization and ethnic monikers points to the fragility of racial hierarchies in Spanish America. At a time when Spanish elites constructed categories of difference that simultaneously separated them from ethnic others and functioned as an apparatus of social control, other ethnic groups, including people of African and indigenous descent, also proclaimed their own definitions of ethnicity and social status in the Spanish American colonies. Douglas Cope argues that colonial categories created by Spanish elites had little meaning in the everyday lives of plebeians at the bottom of the social ladder. Instead, those who were able to attain upward mobility, including mestizos, mulatos blancos, and pardos were more concerned with the sistema de castas because it directly affected their movement in the social hierarchy.

[16] Ibid., 65.

[17] Ibid., 55.

However, quotidian inter-ethnic interactions among the lower classes of African and indigenous descent remained unaffected by elite constructions of race.

The Life of a Free Woman of Color

The legal case of Catalina de los Reyes reveals how free coloreds navigated colonial life in New Spain and negotiated their social status in the colony's social hierarchies. This case also shows how colonial officials responded to the actions and self-fashioning of free coloreds. This land dispute involving Catalina de los Reyes is only one of the hundreds of other cases that involved free and enslaved African descent people who navigated the colonial legal system in Antequera and its environs. In many ways, Catalina was an ordinary woman of African descent in seventeenth-century Antequera. She was a free mulata, and she owned property in the city, just like many other free-colored property owners. Catalina engaged with legal and religious institutions in the city, and her social networks included other mulatos, mestizos, and Spaniards. More specifically, she is an exceptional person because she is one of the rare cases of African descent people whose testimony and actions appear extensively in the historical record. She is unique because of her abundance of wealth and for her highly sought-after property that was located in Antequera's *plaza mayor.* This wealth, specifically her property, and her status as a mulata, would draw her into an embittered land dispute with a high-ranking Spaniard named Antonio de Bohórquez.

During the time of this case, Antequera was a multi-ethnic society undergoing social and economic growth. Much of this expansion was due to the growing casta group and the recovery of the indigenous population, which led to an in-migration of Indians from the city's surrounding regions. By 1673, the city's population included more than 3,000 people of Spanish, indigenous,

and African descent, but it likely had less than 6,000 residents.[18] For the most part, Antequera's inhabitants still relied on the greater Valley of Oaxaca for daily sustenance. At the time, Spanish landholding elites were at the top of the social hierarchy. And yet, there was still social and economic stratification among Spanish elites. Most Spaniards only owned small plots of land in the Valley of Oaxaca, whereas large estates and haciendas were concentrated among six wealthy Spanish families. The service needs of this growing city and the commercial traffic of cochineal also created a demand for Indian and African labor, and those who arrived were all forced to quickly adapt to Spanish urban culture. These changes led to minor shifts at the even the micro-social level in the barrios of Antequera and its surrounding regions. In Jalatlaco, for example, barrios continued to become increasingly homogenized as a result of this population growth.[19] Hence, many urban Indians remained in neighborhoods that were exclusively Nahua, partially from their own choosing and because Spanish elites attempted to solidify existing ethnic divisions.

Catalina's land dispute occurred during a period when the traffic of African-born and American-born slaves to Oaxaca was still flourishing. Just one decade before this case, in 1664, a slave voyage arrived in Veracruz by way of Barbados with 266 African captives. Thirty-seven, or 14 percent, of those enslaved Africans, were sold and delivered directly to secular and religious officials in Antequera, including one of the relatives of Antonio de Bohórquez.[20] The traffic of creole and bozal slaves would increase significantly in the last two decades of the seventeenth century, and eventually taper off in the early eighteenth century. Moreover, during

[18] Chance, 105.

[19] Ibid., 113.

[20] Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Escribanía 292A, leg. 2, fs. 7-18.

the 1670s and 1680s, more slaves were purchased and sold in comparison to the number of enslaved people who obtained their legal freedom in this colonial city. In other words, the city's Spanish elites continued to rely on slave labor in the late seventeenth century. For instance, like many other slaves who served the needs of Antequera's elites, María del Carmen initially worked as a domestic servant in a monastery named Santa Catalina de Sena. In 1670, María was traded to a priest in the Archdiocese of Antequera. María no longer appears in the archival record after this resale. However, her daughter appears as a free mulata who labored at a small farm in Miahuatlan, which was located south of the city. [21] Most other free and enslaved women worked as vendors in stores, selling clothing and food in Antequera. Free and enslaved men, on the other hand, worked as skilled and unskilled laborers. Many unskilled laborers were cooks, cartwrights, and butlers, while skilled laborers included carpenters, silversmiths, and tailors.

Despite the prevalence of the slave trade and the institution of slavery in Oaxaca during the 1670s and 1680s, free and enslaved African descendants still exercised agency to carve out spaces and opportunities for themselves. This process is evident by retracing the lives of free coloreds such as Mateo de la Serna and Catalina de los Reyes. Mateo de la Serna was a free mulato who held property in Antequera, as well as a home south of the city, in Xoxocotlán, and a hacienda on the outskirts of the city.[22] According to a royal decree housed in Mexico's national archive, Mateo also owned a pack train that transported goods between Mexico City and Oaxaca. Due to the dangers along colonial roads, Mateo petitioned to obtain a license for the right to bear

[21] Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Oaxaca (AHAO), Arquidiócesis, Diocesano, Gobierno, Religiosos, box 9, exp. 32.

[22] Archivo Histórico de Notarías del Estado de Oaxaca (AHNO), Protocolos Notariales (PN), Diego Benaias, vol. 152, ff. 716.

arms in 1668.[23] The Spanish colonial state prohibited free coloreds from carrying weaponry at this time. This colonial legislation not only controlled the movement of free coloreds, but it also impeded men, such as Mateo, from safely transporting commercial goods. Even though he faced these obstacles, Mateo eventually obtained a license to bear arms. He would later become a captain of the *compañia de mulatos y negros libres* in Oaxaca, and he petitioned for all his militiamen to also bear arms in the 1680s.[24] By the end of his life, Mateo accrued a considerable amount of wealth. In addition to the properties he possessed, he also owned a black male slave named Thomas Aquino from San Salvador in the Kingdom of Guatemala.[25] In sum, free coloreds faced many restrictions in their everyday lives in New Spain, but as Mateo demonstrates, they were also able to successfully navigate colonial laws to create opportunities for themselves by contesting elite constructions of race.

The world that surrounded Catalina de los Reyes was a growing society with a hierarchical social structure that was still heavily dependent on wage labor and slavery. Residents of Antequera, including commoners, Indians, mestizos, and especially people of African descent, understood these structures of power and social control, and they found fractures in these systems to defend their character, protect their interests, and even improve their social position. Catalina de los Reyes was a mulata who owned several properties, including a home that was located in the plaza mayor and situated next door to Antequera's cathedral. During the early-to-mid colonial period, areas surrounding the plaza mayor generally made up the political, economic, and administrative core of urban centers in New Spain. Spaniards

[23] Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Reales Cedulas, vol. D23, exp. 91.

[24] AGN, Indiferente Virreinal, vol. 3823, exp. 5; vol. 4504, exp. 56.

[25] AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 143, ff. 98.

primarily lived around this main plaza, whereas casta populations resided in the surrounding areas, and natives typically lived in the outer edges of the city. As the colonial period progressed, the nucleus of the city shifted to other areas and the demographics of individual barrios changed as well. Nonetheless, Catalina's litigation with ecclesiastical officials offers incredibly unique insight into how she navigated various colonial spaces, interacted with colonial officials, and defined her status in this colonial society.

The land dispute began in Antequera on September 6, 1673, with the prosecuting attorney of the Bishopric of Oaxaca, Antonio de Bohórquez, presenting a case that remained fundamentally the same over the course of two and a half years.[26] On behalf of the local bishop, Bohórquez attempted to coerce Catalina into selling her home. His justifications for forcing Catalina to sell her property were based on two key points. First, he argued that Catalina owned property adjacent to the episcopal palace and that she allowed disreputable people and licentious activities in her home, which was located within the sphere of influence of Antequera's cathedral. Second, Bohórquez strong-armed Catalina to sell the property because the bishop intended to expand the cathedral and episcopal offices and build a nunnery for "good, wholesome women."[27] The issue with Bohórquez's case, however, is that under Spanish colonial legislation, Catalina had the legal right to retain her property. As codified under the *Siete Partidas* and the *Leyes de Toro,* women in the Spanish colonial world had a legal right to inherit property from their parents on an equal basis with their brothers. Since women inherited property from their parents, and because they had full ownership of community property if their husbands

[26] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3.

[27] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs. 6v-7v.

died, women were able to purchase and sell property both during and after their marriages.[28] Hence, women in the Spanish colonial world had property to litigate over, and they had property to bequeath to others after they died. English common law undoubtedly differed from Spanish colonial legislation in its provisions for inheritance and ownership of property. Under English law, fathers generally passed on their property to their sons rather than their daughters.[29] In this legal framework, a married woman in Britain or the United States, for example, had little control over property, and she could not execute an enforceable contract, write a will, or initiate legal action without her husband's consent. While the Anglo-American tradition enforced the dependency of women on their husbands, Spanish legal practices reinforced women's property rights and provided institutional protections for women to maintain their financial security, both in Spain and its colonies.

Despite Catalina's legal protections on her property, Bohórquez compiled a case to force her to sell her home. From the 210-page land dispute, it is evident that Catalina was a free mulata, a long-time resident of Antequera, a widow, and the mother of three children. Bohórquez relied on various racialized and gendered attacks to force Catalina to sell her home. On September 7, 1673, Bohórquez sought out testimonies from other members of the Church, including a local judge who had personally visited Catalina in her home. In total, Bohórquez obtained testimonies from four rectors and a judge, and each of these individuals provided similar versions of a narrative that depicted Catalina as a disreputable person. The witnesses all confirmed that Catalina's homes were located adjacent to, and that they shared a wall with the

[28] Deborah A. Rosen, "Women and Property across Colonial America: A Comparison of Legal Systems in New Mexico and New York" *Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture* 60, no. 2 (2003): 358-359.

[29] Ibid., 364-365.

episcopal palace. They also all attacked Catalina's character, labeling her as a plebeian mulata who condoned illicit activities in her home. To emphasize the urgency to build a nunnery, one of these witnesses stated that, "Catalina rents out rooms to people of ill repute, and through a window of the home I have seen strangers and vagabonds."[30] Bohórquez's final witness was the *alcalde ordinario* who reiterated the necessity of a nunnery to collect and reform promiscuous women. He stated that:

> …One night at two in the morning, I was searching for a mestiza who cohabitated in this home, and upon finding her, Catalina told me she was married, and for this reason, I left her in this home. After having known that that was not the case, I returned to look for her but could not find her…and on another occasion, I found an Indian woman and a mulato cobbler who were cohabiting in the home. I arrested both of them…[31]

Interestingly, the alcalde's actions suggest a pattern in the treatment of single women. He reported that he had visited Catalina's home on multiple occasions to "clean" the house of disreputable people, but on this occasion, he disregarded the mestiza who was married and later arrested an Indian woman and a mulato.[32] It is possible that these colonial officials specifically targeted, and in this case arrested, unmarried women. Together, these testimonies make a few outrageous assumptions about Catalina. These church officials believed that Catalina hosted scandalous activities in her home and even accused her of running a brothel in her house. By labeling Catalina as a plebeian, these religious officials deliberately disregarded Catalina's social and economic capital in this colonial city. It was unlikely that a plebeian would own one of the most valuable properties in the city at the time. In other words, these individuals, and especially

[30] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs. 7v-9r.

[31] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs. 9v-12v.

[32] Ibid.

Bohórquez, established that Catalina belonged to the lower classes of Antequera's society even though she owned such valuable property, which was one of the primary indicators of elite status at the time.

By September 9, 1673, the case was turned over to the *alcalde mayor* to commence the process of transferring the property to the Church, and to compel Catalina to sell it under pain of excommunication. Bohórquez likely relied on his religious and secular contacts because the civil case was process within just four days. On September 11, the deputy governor ordered the sale of the home. The local courts notified Catalina of this action, and she resisted, responding that she would not sell the house because her children resided in the home. In her statement, Catalina reported that she inherited the home and that she would not sell it. She noted that "my father left me the home and he earned it with his sweat and hard work. And if I were compelled to sell the home, I would just leave it and not receive one *real* for it."[33] Catalina pleaded to the judge by emphasizing the significance of her family and expressing the importance of the property to her since she was a "widow and poor woman with three children."[34] Yet, her counter-arguments fell on deaf ears, and the Church proceeded with an appraisal of the home. And in response to the home's appraisal at only 1,600 pesos, Catalina restated that she inherited the property from her father, a mulato, who originally spent over 20,000 pesos on the property.[35] Moreover, she said that her father spent at least 7,000 pesos on the construction of the home alone, and that thirty years prior, half of the property had already been given to the episcopal palace upon their

[33] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs. 16v-19v.

[34] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs. 19v.

[35] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs. 89r-89v.

request.[36] As a point of comparison, other properties in the Valley of Oaxaca were valued between 12,000 and 30,000 pesos in the early eighteenth century, depending on size and location.[37] The value of Catalina's property was likely closer to what she had stated, and Bohórquez was possibly attempting to cheat Catalina out of thousands of pesos. Therefore, Bohórquez intertwined the threat of excommunication with fraud and deceit. In brief, the sale of this property was not only prejudicial to Catalina, but it also threatened to deprive her of the inheritance that was legally her own.

In the following days, Bohórquez submitted several petitions to order Catalina to comply and to force her out of her home. First, Bohórquez declared that the 1,600-peso payment for Catalina's property would be placed on deposit with a third party. Then Bohórquez forced a local judge to expedite a decision on this case without notifying Catalina. The local scribe was not able to inform Catalina of the judge's decision until September 16, and on that day, Catalina filed an appeal to the *Real Audiencia,* or Royal Tribunal Court in Mexico City, stating that the local court's ruling should be overturned because it was made without her consent. Catalina also presented the deeds of the property as a grievance against the Church for their coercion and their violent intrusion of her property.[38] Ten days later, a local sheriff physically forced Catalina, and a few other women, out of the home. Even though Catalina created a disturbance, the sheriff successfully dragged Catalina out of the house and then he held Bohórquez by the hand, walked

[36] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs. 19v-20v.

[37] William Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 135.

[38] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs. 22-26.

him into the home, and told Bohórquez that he granted him corporal and real possession of the property. Two days later, Catalina submitted another written statement to the Real Audiencia:

> Catalina de los Reyes, widow, of pardo color, resident of this city, in the form that better gives me the right to agree and under protest that I use of the recourses that are favorable to me, I appear before your majesty and I say that in the violent dispossession that has been attempted of my home and the possession that was done with my contradiction and without my consent, which occurred by Don Antonio de Bohórquez…on the 26 of this month, I verbally requested a testimony of everything that had occurred…[for] this reason he threw me out of my home…[39]

The Real Audiencia took several months to consider Catalina's statement, and the judicial process with the Real Audiencia did not officially begin until October 25, 1673. Again, Bohórquez relied on three justifications for coercing Catalina to sell the home: 1) he desired to eradicate ill customs, 2) he insisted on the Church's authority over this issue and this particular location, and 3) he repeated that local authorities had already decided on the eviction in Antequera. In response, Catalina refuted all of these claims, pointing to the illegality of the initial proceedings in Antequera, which were conducted before the Bishop of Oaxaca, a person who did not have jurisdiction over laymen. Catalina also noted that when the case was moved to the jurisdiction of the deputy governor, the Bishop ordered him to adjudicate the case within three days, leaving Catalina with no time to respond. Bohórquez's actions reveal that secular and religious officials in Antequera often collaborated to ensure their desired results. Bishops in the colony generally oversaw the evangelization of natives and ensured the fair treatment of this population. Moreover, the local authorities who often reviewed civil disputes were *alcaldes mayores* and corregidores. Likewise, the illegality of expediting the land dispute to the deputy governor and encouraging him to decide in three short days suggests that local officials probably

[39] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, ff. 32.

marginalized free coloreds, especially when they contested the social order. These proceedings, therefore, reveal not only the treatment of African descent people at the time, but it also shows the power and reach of Spanish elites in this colonial society. But on the other hand, this case demonstrates that Catalina was able to appeal to the Real Audiencia because Spanish colonial courts upheld women's property rights regardless of a woman's socioeconomic status or ethnicity.[40]

The dispute continued with the Real Audiencia for another two years, until Catalina was able to submit testimonies on her behalf. In June 1675, Bohórquez reiterated the Church's position, and Catalina's attorney declared that even if the alleged scandals indeed occurred, the Church did not have sufficient justification to confiscate Catalina's home. Instead, Catalina's attorney proposed the removal of the disreputable people, in which case, there would be no just cause to take possession of Catalina's home.[41] In the following month, Catalina's lawyer obtained four testimonies on her behalf. Catalina's witnesses included three Spaniards and a mulato, who were all employed as skilled artisans and merchants in Antequera. These witnesses collectively confirmed that they knew Catalina and that she had lived peacefully in her home. They also stated that they were unaware of the expansion of the episcopal palace and that Catalina's property was too small to be of any use to the diocese. Also, several of these witnesses stated that they knew Bohórquez, and one Spaniard explicitly suggested that Bohórquez likely abused his power. The Spaniard affirmed that he lived next door to Catalina for two years, and during that time, she never caused any scandals, nor had he ever heard of the Church's plan to

[40] Kimberly Gauderman, *Women's Lives in Colonial Quito: Gender, Law, and Economy in Spanish America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 33.

[41] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs. 97-98.

build a nunnery in the area. Most importantly, he stated that undoubtedly, Bohórquez used the Church's expansion as a pretext to confiscate Catalina's home.[42] By October 1675, the Real Audiencia rendered its verdict, ruling in favor of Catalina. The judges declared that the bishop could not legally force Catalina to sell her property, but that the local justice in Antequera could pursue the disreputable people who lived scandalously in her home.[43]

Catalina's witnesses are a glimpse into her social world. She had three children who were also mulatos, and visitors to her home included mestizas, Indian women, and other mulatos. Her witnesses included several men of African and Spanish descent who all belonged to the middle and lower classes of the social hierarchy. Catalina described her late husband as a mulato, but one of her witnesses also stated that he was a Spaniard. It is possible that Catalina's husband was a mulato blanco or light-skinned mulato, but regardless of his ethnicity, she legally inherited her home from her father, whose ethnicity remained unspecified throughout the case. Like other free-coloreds, Catalina owned property in Antequera, and her self-fashioning offers insight into how African descendants attempted to negotiate their status in Antequera's social hierarchy. Throughout the case, Catalina was labeled as a mulata; however, she self-identified as parda in her testimony. Her self-identification as a high-ranking person of African descent before the Spanish courts implies the way she perceived herself in this society. Catalina strategically claimed to be an impoverished widow in her plea to the local authorities, but her statement to the Real Audiencia shows that she was aware of the social and economic value of her property, and she saw herself as a parda or high-ranking person of African descent. Catalina's understanding of the legal framework in Spanish colonial society implies that she also knew her legal rights as a

[42] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs. 68-73.

[43] AGN, Tierras, vol. 112, exp. 3, fs 105-113.

high-ranking free-person. Hence, the colonial state's legal and institutional protections helped Catalina maintain her property and financial security, and it ultimately gave her the power within this social hierarchy to challenge racialized accusations and construct her own identity as a parda in judicial proceedings. Little is known about Catalina beyond the context of this case; therefore, her occupation beyond landholder is unclear. But to be sure, Catalina interacted with and successfully defended herself against religious and secular officials in both Antequera and Mexico City.

These testimonies offer incredible insight into the perspective of Spanish elites and the extent of power among religious and secular officials in Antequera. Over the course of two and a half years, Bohórquez accused Catalina of allowing "scandalous activities" in her home, and he characterized Catalina, along with other mulatos, as individuals with terrible habits and bad character. His association between mulato status and Catalina's "misbehavior," evidences how Spanish elites viewed free-coloreds in Antequera. Bohórquez established this perspective when he expressed that having such individuals adjacent to the city's cathedral was an unfit representation of the Church. Thus, Bohórquez's accusations draw several conclusions about castas generally, and free-coloreds in particular. By suggesting that Catalina hosted "scandalous" parties that included men and women congregating until late in the evening, Bohórquez not only depicted Catalina as a madam, but he also suggested that free-coloreds did not belong in the plaza mayor or the spaces near the episcopal palace. Bohórquez also specifically targeted a single woman, which begs the question: would he have pursued the property in this manner if Catalina was still married? As we observed at the beginning of the case, the alcalde treated single women differently, suggesting yet another pattern of the social marginalization of free pardas, mulatas, and mestizas. Similarly, Catalina's witness who observed that Bohórquez used the

Church's expansion as a pretext to confiscate Catalina's property indicates that Bohórquez probably marginalized other African descent people in this urban center. Therefore, free coloreds still dealt with the stigma of slavery in the late seventeenth century.

As a part of the Bohórquez family, Antonio was a member of the oligarchy in Oaxaca. Antonio was a critical part of the political and religious spheres of influence in Antequera, and thus, he represents the role of the Church as a guardian of the status quo and the defender of slavery. Members of the Church were the primary slaveholders during this period, and therefore, people like Antonio de Bohórquez represented social, political, and economic power over slaves and other colonial subjects. The Bohórquez family, for example, included secular and religious officials and owners of large entailed estates in the Valley of Oaxaca. Juan de Bohórquez, for instance, was the bishop of Antequera from 1611 to 1633.[44] During that time, he consolidated several properties into an entailed estate that included haciendas, sugar plantations, cattle ranches, and enslaved people.[45] The prosecutor of Catalina's case, Antonio, later acquired and owned this entailed estate between 1676 and 1710.[46] As a member of the six most powerful families in Oaxaca, Antonio was likely considered a "leading citizen" because of his political influence in the region. Thus, Antonio's titles of priest and prosecutor granted him a certain degree of social and political control over life in Antequera. It is not surprising then that several witnesses in Catalina's case accused Bohórquez of habitually targeting African descent people, which likely indicates a broader, more systemic pattern of social marginalization of this group.

[44] Taylor, 165-166.

[45] Ibid., 191.

[46] Ibid., 156.

Catalina's land dispute reveals that property ownership was essential to helping Catalina secure her position as a free parda in this colonial society. Many of the upwardly mobile castas, such as Catalina, capitalized on chances to attain and protect their achieved status. Elite status and important political positions were generally reserved for Spaniards throughout the colonial period, but many castas still maintained a higher status through their occupations and properties ownership. And while matrimony was certainly one way to modify social status, wealth and property ownership were crucial to negotiating status in the city's social structures. The Spanish colonial framework also provided a platform for Catalina to articulate her status as a parda and to contest gendered and racialized attacks. Catalina understood the economic and social capital of her property, and she used that knowledge to justify her decision to retain her house. She appealed to the Spanish colonial courts in various ways. First, she described the property as a family home that supported her three minor children, and she reported that she inherited the property from her father. Second, Catalina pointed to the illegality of the judicial proceedings in Antequera and claimed that the sale of the home was prejudicial to her. Hence, Catalina countered Bohórquez's accusations that she was an unfit resident for this location and she kept the property that was legally her own.

Formal and Informal Unions in Antequera

Matrimony and occupation were also two avenues for free and enslaved people to attain upward social mobility in Spanish America. Formal unions had the potential to lead to social and economic opportunities for men and women of color, as well as their offspring. Moreover, as Douglas Cope argues, marriage patterns demonstrate that the lower classes of castas modified or

even rejected the sistema de castas for their benefit.[47] Therefore, it is important to consider the ways in which people of African descent used marriage to forge social networks, defy elite constructions of race, or gain upward social mobility. As Herman Bennett found in the case of seventeenth-century Mexico City, African captives forged connections with other bozal slaves from similar regions of Africa. This practice was not always the case with free coloreds in New Spain. A minority of free coloreds, including artisans, shopkeepers, and traders strived to move up the social ladder in Mexico City. These upwardly mobile castas struggled to cross the boundaries of Spanish elites because they seldom had the economic capital to compete with elites or to break into the upper ranks of the social hierarchy.[48] The vast majority of free coloreds, however, were not concerned with attaining that kind of elite status. On the contrary, lower class castas lived and worked together in many of the same neighborhoods. In seventeenth-century Puebla, for example, the heavy reliance on slave labor and the growing textile industry made textile mills concentrated sites of inter-ethnic interactions. As a result, enslaved people often worked along with indigenous laborers in Puebla's textile mills.[49] Likewise, Oaxaca's plantations and eighteenth-century textile mills were spaces where free and enslaved people of African descent worked along with mestizos, Spaniards, and Indians. The San Joseph plantation, which was owned by Pedro de Espina, employed slaves such as Esteban de los

[47] Cope, 163.

[48] Ibid., 123.

[49] Dana Velasco Murillo and Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, "Mine Workers and Weavers: Afro-Indigenous Labor Arrangements and Interactions in Puebla and Zacatecas, 1600-1700," in *City Indians in Spain's American Empire: Urban Indigenous Society in Colonial Mesoamerica and Andean South America, 1530-1810,* ed. Dana Velasco Murillo, Mark Lentz, and Margarita R. Ochoa (Brighton; Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), 105.

Ángeles, to work with wage laborers who were mulatos, mestizos, and Spaniards.[50] Therefore, marriage and occupation facilitated cross-cultural contact that sometimes led to better opportunities for free-coloreds.

Inter-ethnic interactions reveal different aspects of the daily lives and social realities of African descent people living in Antequera. Marriage records, for instance, reveal patterns in the spousal selection, social networks, and cross-cultural contact among casta groups. This quantitative source, however, is considerably less revealing in terms of the everyday lives of slaves, women, and Indians. For instance, census data suggest a relative absence of enslaved people and women in urban centers because women were only reported as spouses and slaves were excluded from the census. When paired with qualitative data, such as legal cases and notarial records, marriage registers and censuses provide additional layers to our view of Antequera's society. Supplemental sources, such as marriage and notarial records, reveal that women in Antequera, for example, not only used marriage as a tool to secure their social position, but they were also laborers, litigants, and property owners. In spite of these shortcomings, marriage records and censuses remain useful for recovering and piecing together the overall picture of a city's social structure at any given time. Moreover, as Patricia Seed states that prenuptial disputes and marriage records also expose the limitations of parental authority in the selection of spouses and the limited power of the state in the private lives of colonial subjects.[51] Still, Seed concludes that racial identification and fluid social status were directly related to the division of labor in Spanish colonial cities.[52]

---

[50] AGN, Inquisition, vol. 735, exp. 4

[51] See Seed, "Social Dimensions of Race."

[52] See Seed, *To Love, Honor and Obey in Colonial Mexico.*

I analyze marriage registers from 1732 and the 1792 census to uncover social relations, family structures, and formal unions in eighteenth-century Antequera. The 132 marriage registries processed in Antequera in 1732 provide a broad perspective of formal unions in the city. These records generally detail the names, calidad, occupation, place of origin, residency, and parentage of spouses. Based on this sample of marriage records, I make four observations about marriage patterns in Antequera: 1) comparatively few slaves married in the 1730s, 2) free-coloreds, mestizos, and Indians generally practiced endogamous marriage patterns, 3) mestizas married men of various ethnicities, including Spaniards, mulatos, Indians, and mestizos, and 4) intermarriage rates steadily increased in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The Valley of Oaxaca was comprised of many diverse indigenous groups who generally married within their ethnic group in the 1730s. Although indigenous people probably made up the largest ethnic group in Antequera, they were underrepresented in census data and marriage records. Of 132 marriages completed in 1732, only 38 registers involved an indigenous person.[53] For the most part, indigenous men and women married other Indians. Secondary to this pattern of spousal selection, were indigenous men who sought out mestizas as marriage partners. On the other hand, very few indios married españolas or mulatas. Yet, Indigenous women almost exclusively sought out indigenous men as spouses, with only a very indias married mulatos, mestizos or españoles.[54] Thus, most natives married other people of indigenous descent. During this time, Indians still experienced residential segregation in Antequera. Although they possibly worked near other castas, this cross-cultural contact did not always lead to matrimony. *Mestizos*

[53] Archivo de la Parroquia del Sagrario (APS), Matrimonios, box 83, vol. 6. Marriage registers often failed to include the calidad of spouses. For 1732, 58 registries (29 men and 29 women) did not include this any information on calidad.

[54] APS, Matrimonios, box 83, vol. 6, fs. 271v-308v.

are the only exception to this pattern. Although the number of mestizos who married was generally lower than that of the other ethnic groups, they most often chose spouses outside of their own casta group. Specifically, mestizos often married a similar number of mestizas, indias, mulatas, and españolas. More mestizas married in comparison to mestizos, and they rarely married other mestizos in 1732. Instead, an equal number of mestizas married mulatos and *españoles*, but most mestizas married indigenous men.[55] These marriage patterns align with Patricia Seed's findings of mestizos in eighteenth-century Mexico City. Seed found that mestizas, in particular, demonstrated the highest degree of upward social mobility because they held an ambiguous role in the socioeconomic structure.[56] Thus, it was probably easier for mestizos and mestizas to cross the boundaries of Spanish elites through marriage, occupation, or even through self-identification in official records.

African descent people followed a similar marriage pattern to Indians. Most mulatos and mulatas married other free-coloreds. Of 264 people who married in 1732, 62 individuals or 23 percent were of African descent. From this subgroup, only one woman was labeled as negra. Juan Francisco Gallardo, a mulato mason formerly from Pinotepa, married a free black woman named Isabel Josepha María on May 18, 1732. Ironically, the only enslaved person in this record was a chino slave named Luis Antonio de Silva from Manila who married a mestiza in October of that year. Hence, all other marriages in this subgroup involved free mulatos and mulatas. The overrepresentation of mulatos in this subsample is due to the equal number of mulatos and mulatas who appear in this record. Of the smaller group of people who married other castas,

[55] Ibid.

[56] Patricia Seed, "Social Dimensions of Race: Mexico City, 1753" *Hispanic American Historical Review* 62, no. 4 (1982): 601.

some mulatos wedded mestizas, whereas mulatas formed unions with a similar number of Indians and mestizos.[57]

This snapshot of formal unions suggests a few important characteristics of the free and enslaved population in Antequera. The fact that the 1732 marriage registers only included one black person indicates a decline in the city's overreliance on slave labor in Antequera. This data also reflects broader changes in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As the casta group had grown by the 1670s, the number of negros and negras in Antequera diminished. The absence of enslaved people in this record suggests that indeed, most slaves already obtained their legal freedom in this colonial city by the 1730s.[58] These findings are supported by the fact that the number of registered slave marriages was higher at the tail end of the seventeenth century than the first decade of the eighteenth century.[59] Similarly, the one woman labeled as negra points to an increase in mestizaje in the early eighteenth century.

Despite the moderate increase in intermarriages, most individuals still selected spouses in their ethnic group. Specifically, mulatos, mestizos, and indigenous men and women favored marriage partners of the same calidad. Of these three ethnic groups, mestizas had the greatest variety of spouses. The husbands of mestizas included Spaniards, mestizos, mulatos, and Indian men. This finding hints at the many options, opportunities, and social mobility that mestizas held in this colonial city. Surprisingly, however, mulatas most often married Indian men and mestizos. These mulatas probably used marriage as a tool to either attain legal freedom or to

[57] APS, Matrimonios, box 83, vol. 6, fs. 271v-308v.

[58] See AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, Francisco de Quero, Joseph Manuel Alvarez de Aragon, and Joseph de Arauxo for dozens of manumission letters processed between 1680 and 1730.

[59] See APS, Matrimonios, boxes 80 and 81.

avoid tribute obligations. Therefore, mulatas still dealt with the stigma of slavery at this time. Their strategies to evade this stigma likely affected their spousal selection.[60] Intermarriage rates among Spaniards remained high because there were fewer españolas in the city, and just like other parts of Spanish America, gender imbalance forced Spanish men to turn to women of indigenous and African descent for formal and informal unions.

Marriage records on their own do not accurately capture the everyday interactions between free-coloreds and other castas in eighteenth-century Antequera. Yet, when supplemented with qualitative data from civil and criminal cases, marriage records can provide more detail on the public and private lives of colonial subjects. The criminal case of Domingo de la Coca offers insight into inter-ethnic interactions between free-coloreds and ethnic others and helps us understand the meaning of the categories of difference in eighteenth-century Antequera. Domingo Cayetano de la Coca was a free mulato who married a mestiza named Antonia Josepha Villanueva in the 1730s. This individual was also suspected of stabbing a neighboring mestizo who had been involved with his wife. On November 26, 1733, the alcalde ordinario of Antequera was notified that a mestizo had been severely injured. He was told that a quarrel occurred between Domingo de la Coca and a mestizo named Francisco Manuel near the Church of Nuestra Señora de las Nieves, and that Domingo was currently missing. When the alcalde visited Domingo's home later that afternoon, he found traces of this quarrel, including parts of a knife on the ground and paper soiled in blood. Several witnesses validated the alcalde's observations,

[60] See AHNO, Joseph Manuel Alvarez de Aragon, vol. 44, fs. 553-554v. Oaxaca's notarial archive contains multiple records of slave women who tried to purchase their legal freedom and sought out help from their husbands who were mestizos. The account noted above is about Francisca Xaviera Alvarez, a 17-year-old mulata slave whose husband, Pedro de la Cruz, was mestizo. She solicited her husband's help to pay 250 pesos for her freedom.

noting that the fight took place in Domingo's home because that they heard screams from his house and they saw Francisco's six stab wounds.[61]

At the center of this criminal case were three individuals: Francisco Manuel, the mestizo who was stabbed and on the verge of death; Domingo de la Coca, the mulato who admittedly committed the crime; and Domingo's wife, Antonia Josepha Villanueva, a mestiza who was caught in between these two men. Their testimonies give similar versions of a narrative that involved intermarriage, adultery, and violence. Antonia's testimony reveals a love triangle that developed between these individuals. She was married to Domingo but also admitted to the courts that she had maintained an illicit relationship with Francisco for six years. Antonia reported that her husband was initially troubled by this situation, but Domingo later grew to accept the circumstances, and even allowed Francisco to live on his property.[62] Therefore, according to Antonia's testimony, there were different reasons behind Domingo's attack because he was supposedly accepting of her relationship with Francisco. On the same token, Antonia's behavior presents a different narrative. On the day of the crime, Antonia had spent some time with Francisco, and she asked him to leave her home because she feared that Domingo would return shortly. Francisco reassured her in saying, "do not be afraid, because even if they kill me or strangle me, I will die for you."[63] A few hours later, Domingo surprised the couple in his home, and he proceeded to attack Francisco.

[61] AHNO, Diligencias, Manuel Francisco de Rueda, vol. 482, fs. 5v-7.

[62] AHNO, Diligencias, Manuel Francisco de Rueda, vol. 482, ff. 10v.

[63] AHNO, Diligencias, Manuel Francisco de Rueda, vol. 482, ff. 10.

Domingo's testimony, on the other hand, presents an account of fear, dishonor, and domestic violence. In his testimony to the court, Domingo explained how he discovered Fernando his wife in his home. The local courts recorded that:

> At two in the afternoon, [upon] arriving in his home he found Francisco Manuel master fireworks-maker, with whom he knows that his wife had an illicit relationship, and having been taken of his honor, he charged at him with a knife that he was carrying, and he stabbed him…Remonstrated over having found Francisco in his home, nor does he approve of the illicit relationship he maintains with his wife.[64]

Domingo's testimony reveals that ethnicity was likely irrelevant to his actions. Instead, he was motivated by the fact that he was stripped of his honor. Thus, the notion of honor still shaped the everyday actions of castas. Domingo demonstrated a pattern of dishonor and domestic violence. He explained that he had been involved in several domestic disputes because of this six-year illicit relationship, and his father-in-law even had him arrested on a past occasion. As a result, Domingo voluntarily separated from his wife for more than three years, but his wife always returned to him. However, on that afternoon in November, Domingo was determined to seek revenge because Francisco had been openly harassing him for quite some time.[65] Domingo's account thus illustrates that he was tormented by Francisco, his father-in-law, and even his wife. Yet, this case is also indicative of the experiences of women in this colonial city. Although Antonia's actions triggered Domingo to commit the crime, his testimony suggests that she also lived in fear. Just as Domingo feared the persistence of dishonor, she feared his retaliation and violence. According to Antonia, she specifically asked Francisco to leave her home because she was afraid that Domingo would find them together. Likewise, the repeated disputes involving

[64] AHNO, Diligencias, Manuel Francisco de Rueda, vol. 482, fs. 12r-12v.

[65] AHNO, Diligencias, Manuel Francisco de Rueda, vol. 482, ff. 11v-14.

Domingo, Antonia, and her father, as well as Domingo's arrest, indicate a pattern of fear, violence, and reluctant acceptance. And since Domingo initially allowed Francisco to live on his property, Francisco most likely did not have the resources to sustain himself, and therefore, Antonia could not permanently separate from Domingo permanently.

This captivating narrative exposes the everyday interactions between free-coloreds and ethnic others at a time when Antequera was already a diverse urban center. By the 1730s, the city's population exceeded 6,000 residents, and thus, inter-ethnic interactions were commonplace. As noted, marriage records suggest that free coloreds generally followed endogamous marriage patterns, but mestizas most frequently married individuals outside their ethnic group. Thus, the official categories of mulato and mestizo had little meaning on an everyday basis. Although this narrative was filtered through the lens of the judicial system, this criminal case points to the effects of racial classification on the public and private lives of mulatos and mestizos. As a mestiza, Antonia was married to a mulato, but she maintained an illicit relationship with another mestizo. As Douglas Cope notes, elite constructions of race had little significance for plebeians living in New Spain between 1650 and the 1730s.[66] Similarly, Domingo, Antonia, and Francisco's ethnicities had minor bearing on their marriage, interpersonal relationships, and living arrangements. Some scholars have pointed to ethnic tensions between mestizos and mulatos in the colony, but Domingo's hatred for Francisco stemmed from his wife's infidelity and dishonor, rather than racial hatred.[67]

---

[66] Cope, 163.

[67] See Fisher, "Creating and Contesting Community." Andrew Fisher argued that ethnic tensions existed in the present-day state of Guerrero. His study however, illustrates the importance of understanding the context in which cross-cultural contact took place. The social, political, and geographic setting of Tierra Caliente was completely different from Antequera.

This criminal case also speaks to changes in colonial structures, which reflect broader social changes in colonial Oaxaca. In comparison to the case of Catalina de los Reyes, which took place in 1664, colonial categories were not central to Domingo's criminal case in 1733. During Catalina's land dispute, the bishop's association between her status as a mulata and the supposed scandalous activities in her home were justification to coerce her to sell her property. Catalina's social status was in question throughout the case, and as a mulata, she contested elite constructions of race. There was also more at stake for Catalina and the local bishop. The presence of a free mulata in a space that was generally reserved for Spanish elites sent a particular message to the residents of Antequera. The bishop's relentless defamation of Catalina's character shows the lengths Spaniards went to strengthen and protect their elite status and maintain the social order. In short, race mattered in the 1660s, but it was most important to Spanish elites and upwardly mobile castas. In contrast, Domingo's status as a mulato was seemingly irrelevant to the overall criminal investigation. The Spanish colonial courts did not target Domingo because of his race, and in fact, the case did not mention Domingo's status as a mulato until Domingo presented his testimony at the end of the case. In their testimonies, Domingo self-identified as mulato, whereas his wife and Francisco labeled themselves as mestizos. Their use of colonial categories did not appear to help or hinder the outcome of the proceedings. Likewise, race did not shape the cross-cultural contact between these individuals. Domingo was a tailor, and Francisco was employed as a fireworks-maker; both individuals belonged to the lower social classes of skilled artisans in Antequera.

This case study helps unravel the layers and fluidity of New Spain's social hierarchies, and it contributes to a larger body of scholarship on colonial categorization and inter-ethnic interactions. Andrew Fisher's analysis of social relations in the Tierra Caliente region makes an

argument for ethnic tensions between people of indigenous and African descent.[68] Fisher's observations of ethnic conflict in Cacalotepeque reveal a setting in which late colonial changes affected land use, migration patterns, and inter-ethnic interactions. Despite the prevalence of residential segregation and Nahuas' complaints about the abuse of power among Spaniards and other castas, I argue that these kinds of ethnic tensions did not exist in Antequera in the mid-to-late eighteenth century.[69] On the other hand, Matthew Restall contends that African descendants, and specifically, pardos and mulatos, held an ambiguous role as a "black middle" in colonial Yucatan.[70] Since Yucatan and Oaxaca both comprised a Spanish minority surrounded by an indigenous majority, one might expect to find similar patterns of cross-cultural contact. Yet, in the case of Antequera or the greater Valley of Oaxaca, there was no clear "black middle" of intermediaries between Spaniards and Indians. Rather, the intermediaries in the Valley were often multilingual indigenous people.[71] In Antequera, free-coloreds held many of the same occupations as mestizos and Indians. Pardos and mulatos were also just as likely to practice racial "passing" as mestizos in the city, and they were often fully integrated into the city's social structure. These examples emphasize the regional distinctions in examining race relations, colonial categorization, and cross-cultural contact in the colony.

[68] See Fisher, "Creating and Contesting Community."

[69] Chance, 115-120.

[70] See Restall, *The Black Middle.*

[71] See Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between.*

Occupations of Free Coloreds in Eighteenth-Century Antequera

Oaxaca's Golden Age took place in the second half of the eighteenth century.[72] Between 1750 and 1800, the city of Antequera, and in general the entire colony, experienced significant social and economic growth. These changes were largely a product of the Bourbon Reforms, which aimed to expand commercial trade by lowering import duties in the Spanish American colonies and eliminating trade monopolies. These reforms allowed Spanish American merchants able to engage in reciprocal trade with Spain, which impacted cities in a number of ways. One of these outcomes was that the population of New Spain increased by 83 percent from 3,336,000 people in 1742 to 6,122,000 inhabitants in 1810. Similarly, the population in the Valley of Oaxaca rose by 57 percent from approximately 70,000 people in 1740 to 110,000 residents in the 1790s. And by 1777, the population of Antequera increased threefold, from about 6,000 inhabitants in 1699 to 18,558 people.[73]

The Bourbon Reforms sparked an economic boom in Antequera that included a significant increase in the cochineal trade and a revival of the textile industry in the region. In Antequera, this economic expansion started in the 1740s, but, just like in other areas of New Spain, most wealth was concentrated among a small group of Spanish elites. As John Chance and Brian Hamnett argue, Antequera was emblematic of the commodities that connected independent merchants in the Spanish American colonies with trading companies and European elites across the Atlantic.[74] This economic boom was mostly attributed to the Bourbon Reforms,

[72] Chance referred to Oaxaca's "Golden Age" as the mid-eighteenth century (1740s-1760s) because of the population upsurge and economic boom that took place in Antequera.

[73] Chance, 144-145.

[74] Ibid., 145-146.

but the process of economic expansion and an opening of global markets had already occurred throughout the eighteenth century. Shifts in transatlantic and intercolonial slave traffic, for example, show that the control of the slave trade shifted from the Portuguese to British, French, and Dutch merchants in the early-to-mid eighteenth century. Thus, the traffic of goods and people increased sharply during the eighteenth century. Cochineal, as another example, was the second most valuable commodity exported from New Spain. This valuable red dye was predominantly produced and exported from the Valley of Oaxaca. The volume of the cochineal trade steadily increased in the second half of the eighteenth century, reaching its peak in 1774. This commercial activity also revived the weaving industry and the number of textile mills in Antequera increased considerably between 1793 and 1796, before the industry reached its peak at the turn of the century. Although cochineal continued to be produced by indigenous people in the Valley of Oaxaca, the textile industry created many opportunities for creoles, castas, and Indians in Antequera.[75] Moreover, by the 1790s, most artisans in Antequera's lower classes worked in the textile industry.

In the late eighteenth century, Antequera's social hierarchy continued to be stratified along race and class lines. A small group of Spanish elites dominated commercial trade and property ownership. Peninsular merchants continued to control the traffic of valuable goods, including cochineal, but landowners in the Valley still dealt with indigenous communities who were resistant to Spanish control, and thus, labor shortages plagued the Valley. In contrast, Antequera was flourishing by the late eighteenth century. City plans from 1777 show how Antequera expanded to include barrios such as Jalatlaco, and how the demographic make-up of these neighborhoods changed Specifically, by 1777, indigenous people no longer experienced

[75] Ibid., 146-148.

the residential segregation they had been subjected to earlier in the colonial period.[76] Jalatlaco had been an exclusively Nahua barrio in the seventeenth century, but by the late eighteenth century, a growing number of mestizos and mulatos took over this settlement, and it eventually became a diverse neighborhood. The city's growth also involved public works projects such as the construction of streets and buildings, and local commerce and manufacturing remained strong because of the cochineal and textile industries. People of indigenous and African descent were the primary source of labor for these public works projects, and Indians were still the primary producers of cochineal in the Valley. As Chance concludes, the distribution of occupations in Antequera remained the same since the late seventeenth century.[77]

These socioeconomic changes also impacted African descent people in Antequera. The free-colored population in the city fluctuated during the colonial period. As early as the mid-sixteenth century, mulatos and mestizos represented one-third of Antequera's vecinos, and by 1568, the free and enslaved people outnumbered Spaniards and mestizos living in the city.[78] Although there are no comprehensive records on Antequera's overall population in the seventeenth century, marriage records are offer valuable insight into the city's demographic composition during this period. Based on Chance's analysis of marriage records from 1693 to 1700, free and enslaved blacks, mulatos, and pardos represented nearly one quarter (24.4 percent) of the population who married in Antequera at the tail-end of the seventeenth century.[79] Moreover, this data suggests that mulatos continued to outnumber mestizos in the 1690s. One

[76] AGI, Planos de México 556 bis.

[77] Chance, 150.

[78] Ibid., 99.

[79] Ibid., 132.

caveat to this finding is that mestizos were more likely to "pass" as creoles, which explains why mulatos outnumbered mestizos, and why an overwhelmingly large creole group (31.2 percent) lived in Antequera. Chance considers free-coloreds as a socially and economically homogeneous group because they faced more legal restrictions and limitations for social mobility when compared to mestizos.[80] Free mulatos also exceeded the enslaved population in the city. When cross-referenced with bills of sale and manumission letters, this growth among free-coloreds confirms that more enslaved people obtained legal freedom between 1690 and 1730 in comparison to the second half of the eighteenth century.[81] In other words, casta populations, including mulatos, grew significantly between the late seventeenth century and the mid-eighteenth century.

By the 1790s, Antequera's population had grown to include over 18,000 inhabitants, and free and enslaved African descent people made up approximately 14 percent of the city's overall population.[82] This shift in the free-colored population could be attributed to multiple factors, including a low reproductive rate among free colored women or a higher incidence of racial passing. The latter scenario was far more likely because most African descendants were born free or had already attained their legal freedom by the late eighteenth century. In short, it is possible that free coloreds negotiated their social status and self-identified as pardos, or they self-identified as a more elite casta, just as mestizos did in the prior century.

Antequera's 1792 census provides a comprehensive profile of the city's population and

[80] Ibid., 101.

[81] The limitation of these marriage records is that they only represent married individuals, and do not include people who were single or widowed.

[82] Chance, 156.

free-coloreds' position in its social structure. In comparison to other archival records, the 1792 census provides the most extensive overview of Antequera's social hierarchy and its population by including fields of information on nearly all of the city's residents, as well as their specific occupations, and the make-up within households. This record includes the name, calidad, age, marital status, physical description, occupations, and street address of adult males living in Antequera. This document also details the names and ages of other individuals living in these households, including spouses, children, relatives, and servants. Since colonial authorities only solicited this census data for military service, this source does not include information on Indians and enslaved people. This record also gives little information on women in Antequera because it only lists the name, age, and calidad of female spouses who lived in these residences. Excluding Indians and the enslaved, this source, nonetheless, lists Antequera's population as 18,008 in 1792.[83] This figure shows us that Antequera's population was smaller than that of Mexico City, Puebla, and even Santiago de Guatemala at the time, but also near the size of Boston or Philadelphia.

The socioracial terms that appear in the 1792 census are consistent with the classifications that were used in official records in the previous century, but this census also incorporated the additional the categories of morisco, castizo, and pardo. I should note that recording practices often involved census takers walking from home to home, recording information on household members, based on their perception of ethnicity. For this reason, Chance identifies a larger number than expected of castizos living in the city, which suggests that census takers were more likely to label individuals using this term. Each of these terms carried varying definitions in distinct contexts. Moriscos, for example, were considered as Muslim

[83] AGN, Padrones vol. 13.

converts to Christianity in sixteenth-century Spain and its colonies. In legal terms and contrary to other people of African descent, moriscos could invoke some protections such as claiming status as baptized Christians who were not subject to enslavement.[84] By the mid-to-late eighteenth century, however, morisco was understood to refer to the offspring of a Spaniard and a mulato. Within the sistema de castas in New Spain, castizos and moriscos were the closest of all castas to whiteness. As Patricia Seed argues, both groups were generally associated with upward social mobility; castizos and moriscos usually held the same occupations in eighteenth-century Mexico City.[85] By definition, castizos were the offspring of a Spaniard and a mestizo. As Ben Vinson argues, castizos rarely appeared in the archival record of Mexico City, and these individuals seldom married people of African descent.[86] By comparison, the term de color pardo signified "of brown color," hence, the absolutes of "whiteness" and "blackness" did not apply because these categories were socially constructed.[87] In other words, the term pardo referred to a person of color, as suggested by the term "de color," but in daily practice in Antequera, the colonial category still referred to a person of African descent who was typically also labeled as a mulato. In fact, the term pardo generally appears in Antequera's notarial records and court cases, where individuals made a concerted effort to self-identify as pardo, even when colonial authorities had

[84] Karoline P. Cook, *Forbidden Passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 6.

[85] Seed, 598.

[86] Ben Vinson III, *Before Mestizaje: The Frontiers of Race and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 134-136.

[87] Ann Twinam, *Purchasing Whiteness: Pardos, Mulattos, and the Quest for Social Mobility in the Spanish Indies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 46.

labeled them as mulato.[88] Chance also argues that the terms morisco and pardo were not used in the seventeenth century and that these terms referred to light-skinned mulatos. I contend that although these categories were less common in official records of the seventeenth century, they were nevertheless used in the preceding century because they still appeared in Inquisition, civil and criminal cases, and notarial sources from Antequera. Therefore, the creation of these terms reflects multiple strategies for negotiating status, and as Chance surmises, they also reveal an ongoing integration of free-coloreds into the larger casta and creole groups in the city.[89]

The fluidity and complexity of these racial categories indicate the potential extent of social mobility in this colonial city. Free coloreds capitalized on multiple opportunities to secure or improve their position in the social hierarchy. One approach to defending a person's social status involved articulating that status in official records. The terms pardo and morisco are more common in Antequera's notarial, parish, and judicial archives because free-coloreds, such as Catalina de los Reyes, were able to self-identify in these spaces. By contrast, the 1792 census includes an overwhelming majority of mulatos who likely identified differently in other locations. Another avenue to attain upward mobility was by racial "passing" through marriage. In a sample of 387 free-coloreds who appear as married in the 1792 census, 167 individuals or 43 percent were married to a Spanish woman, mestiza, morisca, or parda.[90] These findings suggest that nearly half of free-colored men selected partners who would ultimately increase their social standing or that of their offspring.

---

[88] This points to a limitation of the historical record. Like other records, court cases, and legal testimonies in particular, were filtered through the voices of colonial authorities, plaintiffs, defendants, and witnesses, and thus, we cannot treat these testimonies at face value.

[89] Chance, 157.

[90] AGN, Padrones vol. 13.

The 1792 census is an invaluable source for obtaining a general profile of Antequera's population, but there are also serious limitations to this record. Based on my analysis of the 1792 census, I suggest that most African descendants were free because census-takers excluded information on slaves since they did not qualify to serve in the militia.[91] The census also indicates that although most mulatos married other mulatas, intermarriage rates were still significant, with mulatos and pardos seeking formal unions with pardas, españolas, indias, mestizas, castizas, and moriscas. On the same token, gender is difficult to assess because this census offers little information on women and children. Census takers often failed to record the social status of these individuals, leaving much to be desired for understanding the lives of women living and working in Antequera. Of the few pardas and mulatas listed as the head of household in the census, most women were single, widowed, or their husbands were traveling merchants and muleteers. Thus, the occupations of free colored women are nearly nonexistent in this record.

By analyzing marriage patterns in these households, I found that more than half of all pardos and mulatos selected free-colored women as spouses. From a sample of 292 households, including mulatos, pardos, and negros reported as the head of household, 57 percent or 165 men chose spouses that were pardas or mulatas. In contrast, only 60 of the 292 households listed the female spouses as mestizas, and another 50 pardos and mulatos selected Spanish women as their wives. Moreover, this is likely due to the underrepresentation of Indians in the 1792 census, but only 13 pardos and mulatos were recorded as married to Indian women at the time.[92] This

[91] My analysis of bills of slave sale and manumission records reveals that most slaves obtained their legal freedom between 1680 and 1730. Moreover, the number of slave sales gradually decreased during the eighteenth century and trailed off by the 1760s.

[92] AGN, Padrones vol. 13.

finding shows that free coloreds generally followed endogamous marriage patterns, but most importantly, this data also suggests that the height of intermarriage likely occurred earlier with the rise of the casta population in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. And given these marriage patterns, one would expect to find distinct barrios that were racially-exclusive and comprised of free-coloreds, Indians, or mestizos.

This census data reveals that free pardos and mulatos were dispersed throughout Antequera. As former slaves or descendants of enslaved people, free-coloreds often worked in the homes of Spanish elites. They also worked in the areas surrounding the plaza mayor as shopkeepers and artisans. Data in the 1792 census suggests that most free-coloreds lived in a six-block radius around the plaza mayor and indicates that these individuals were indeed a significant part of the administrative, economic, and religious core of the city. These individuals largely lived on or around the Calle de las Nieves, which was a hub for trading goods such as cacao, cochineal, indigo, and textiles during the colonial era. Their presence around this commercial area is evidence that they played prominent roles in the city's economy, and did not merely serve only as domestic servants or laborers. Although most pardos and mulatos were concentrated near the plaza mayor, this group also lived in other areas of the city. For example, the mulatos named Casimiro Avecilla and Juan Segura resided in Jalatlaco, which was an exclusively Nahua barrio earlier in the colonial period.[93] Thus, people of African descent lived and worked throughout the city and were undoubtedly a part and parcel of this colonial society.

The 1792 census does not categorize individuals into specific social classes, but instead, it includes information on the occupations of residents in Antequera. From the professions that appear in the document, Chance identified three socioeconomic groups in Antequera: 1) elites, 2)

[93] Ibid.

preindustrial middle groups, including professionals, high-level artisans, and small landowners, and 3) lower groups, such as low-level artisans. Spanish elites almost exclusively made up the group of elites and professionals, but castas, and free coloreds, in particular, comprised the majority of the middle and lower groups.[94]

By focusing on free-colored men, I have identified the primary occupations of free *pardos, mulatos,* and *moriscos* in late eighteenth-century Antequera. My analysis of free coloreds reveals that, like other *castas*, most free coloreds labored in the textile industry that thrived in the mid-to-late eighteenth century. Table 4.2 shows that most African descent people fell into the lower socioeconomic groups, but a limited number of free-coloreds belonged to the preindustrial middle groups. A small number of African descendants were a part of the professional group, including eight *mulato* church clerks and one scribe. Another 30 men were high-status artisans, and a more significant number of individuals were small landholders and traders. By comparison to the preindustrial middle group, the vast majority of free coloreds belonged to the lower groups of Antequera's social hierarchy. *Pardos* and *mulatos* represented nearly 36 percent of all artisans in the city, but they also made up more than half of all artisans in certain trades. For instance, free-coloreds represented 55 percent of all button-makers and 77 percent of cart-makers, which suggests that *pardos* and *mulatos* possibly dominated these trades. They were the minority, however, among confectioners and potters. Generally, free coloreds represented between half and two-thirds of most artisans, which confirms that *castas* at the lower end of the social ladder worked in a wide range of different trades in the textile industry. At the bottom of the social hierarchy were servants and unemployed residents. Free-coloreds made up 66 percent of all servants, but they were only 11 percent of unemployed people. Finally, 573

[94] Chance, 160.

Table 4.2: Occupations of Free Coloreds in Antequera, 1792

Middle Groups		Lower Groups	
Professionals		Low-status artisans	
Members of Religious Orders	8	Bakers	17
Scribes	1	Blacksmiths	39
High-status artisans		Butchers	29
Barber-surgeons	13	Button-makers	28
Musicians	10	Candlemakers	5
Painters	7	Carpenters	21
Merchants	1	Cart-makers	17
Miners	2	Chair-makers	22
Shopkeepers	3	Confectioners	3
Silversmiths	1	Dyers	7
Small landholders	25	Fireworks-makers	10
Traders	19	Hat-makers	44
		Masons	22
		Potters	5
		Shoemakers	124
		Tailors	104
		Tanners	24
		Turners	36
		Weavers	61
		Other*	39
		Muleteers	6
		Servants	62
		Unemployed	11
		Undeclared	573
		TOTALS	
		Middle Groups	91
		Lower Groups	736
		Undeclared	573
			1,400

Source: AGN, Padrones vol. 13.[95]

[95] Low-status artisans marked as "Other" include fewer than five individuals in each of the following occupations: apprentices, postman, water carriers, undergarment-makers, comb-makers, and travelers.

individuals, or more than one-third of free African descendants in this sample, did not declare their professions, which leaves many unanswered questions regarding the exact socioeconomic status of free-coloreds in eighteenth-century Antequera.

Although the 1792 census did not classify residents into socioeconomic groups, it still separated male residents into three social classes. Most men in Antequera were classified into first, second, and third classes. First class mulatos and pardos were single or widowed young men, generally between the ages of 16 and 36, and these men held occupations as tanners, landholders, weavers, tailors, confectioners, shoemakers, servants, barbers, traders, water carriers, hat-makers, carpenters, chair-makers, and painters.[96] In short, first-class pardos and mulatos were young, skilled laborers. And yet, 23 percent of these men were servants. Therefore, first class pardos and mulatos were considered mulatos útiles de primera clase because they were young, single and did not have children.

Similarly, those who made up the second and third groups were generally skilled laborers. Second-class pardos and mulatos were typically between the ages of 20 and 38, married, without children, and they held professions as hat-makers, weavers, tailors, sail-makers, masons, servants, bakers, button-makers, lathe operators, muleteers, butchers, laborers, chair-makers, and shoemakers. Finally, third-class African descendants fell between the ages of 20 and 39, were either married or widowed, with children, and they held all the above-noted occupations, in addition to being shopkeepers, carriage drivers, blacksmiths, and musicians.[97] The wide range of occupations among the three classes implies that African descent men were

[96] AGN, Padrones vol. 13.

[97] AGN, Padrones vol. 13.

both high and low-level artisans and professionals who belonged to at least two socioeconomic classes in this city.

This data indicates that the first, second and third social classes were not a form of economic stratification. Instead, these social classifications were a reflection of an individual's age and marital status, regardless of their ethnicity.[98] Third class mulatos made up the largest group of all three classes, meaning that most free-coloreds in Antequera were in their twenties and thirties and married with children. Those belonging to the second class were generally adults in their thirties, and most of the first class pardos and mulatos were adolescents or in their early twenties.

All other ethnic groups, including Spaniards, castizos, and mestizos were categorized separately; most Spaniards fell into the category of first-class men, who were either single or widowed.[99] This finding is a reflection of Spaniards' social status in Antequera throughout the colonial era. In the early period, wealthy Spaniards from Mexico City and Puebla were reluctant to move to Oaxaca, and financial gains such as encomiendas or control of inter-regional trade were two pull factors for Spaniards to establish roots in the city. Even during Oaxaca's Golden Age in the late colonial period, the wealthiest residents in the city were peninsular merchants with commercial ties to Mexico City, Puebla, and Europe. The large number of young, high and low-level Spanish artisans and the underrepresentation of Spanish women in the 1792 census indicates that these men likely married or maintained informal unions with ethnic others.

In comparing the status of pardos and mulatos with that of Spaniards, castizos, Indians, and mestizos, it is clear that Antequera's social hierarchy was not solely defined along class

[98] The 1792 census includes two lists of first, second, and third-class men: one list categorized free pardos and mulatos, and the other list applied to ethnic others, including Spaniards, mestizos, and castizos.

[99] AGN, Padrones vol. 13.

lines, but race still played an important role in access to power. By comparing these groups, I found that first, second, and third-class men of all ethnicities shared many of the same occupations. Spaniards, castizos, and mestizos, however, held a more extensive range of professions in all three classes. These men were often listed as miners, students, notaries, elite merchants, bookstore owners, and even scribes, and most of these occupations were almost exclusively part of the first-class group of young single men.[100] Moreover, nearly all of the scribes, notaries, and elite merchants in Antequera were Spanish elites. This implies that race and an individual's access to economic and political power were critical to their occupational status in the city's socioeconomic hierarchy. Property ownership was important as well because a small group of Spanish elites owned the highest concentration of lands in the Valley of Oaxaca. Hence, Spaniards made up the small minority of wealthy elites, which included cochineal and textile merchants, royal officials, high clergy, and large estate owners, and the vast majority of residents in Antequera were professionals and skilled craftsmen. Indeed, this was a fluid social hierarchy with a relatively large "middle" group of high and low-level artisans and merchants who were generally castas. Although there was a high degree of racial passing among free-coloreds and mestizos in the late colonial period, individuals of African descent had not completely evaded the stigma of slavery because they could not access the occupations that were exclusively reserved for Spaniards.[101]

---

[100] Ibid.

[101] Throughout the colonial era, mestizos, Indians, and free and enslaved African descent people faced limitations in their opportunities for upward mobility. Free coloreds and those in captivity had limited rights and movement in the colony, which also hindered their ability to move up the social ladder. African descent people, for example, faced tribute obligations, their attire was regulated, movement was regulated, they were prohibited from owning firearms, they could not gather in large groups, and they were banned from holding political offices. These restrictions affected their access to many occupations and even lucrative commercial networks.

Conclusion

The sistema de castas was a fragile system of racial classifications and a mechanism of social control. This social hierarchy, which existed throughout the colony, served to limit the rights, movement, and freedoms of free-coloreds, as well as other castas. These racial categories were an elite construction of race that mostly only mattered to Spanish elites and those near the top of the social ladder. On an everyday basis, however, racial classifications had less implications, especially for those in the lower classes of the social hierarchy. Antequera was still a growing society in the early eighteenth century, and the factors that determined elite status were predominantly landownership and race. A small group of Spanish elites owned most entailed estates in the Valley of Oaxaca, and yet, a free mulata named Catalina owned one of the most valuable properties in Antequera. Catalina's legal dispute reveals that African descendants articulated their social status and they defended their rights in legal settings. Free coloreds such as Catalina, either rejected or modified racial labels, and they even practiced their own definition of Diaspora identities. Likewise, the criminal case of Domingo de la Coca shows that elite constructions of race were less significant to everyday interactions between lower-class casta groups. Moreover, eighteenth-century marriage records and census data show that most free-coloreds married within their ethnic group, but nearly half of this group lived with ethnic others. By the late eighteenth century, the factors that determined social status had changed to include occupation, property ownership, and access to political power. Official records, such as the 1792 census, suggest that free-coloreds belonged to the middle and lower-class groups in Antequera's social hierarchy. This finding reveals the limitations of free-coloreds' agency, and it signifies that race still mattered in different ways and to different degrees in the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

This dissertation ends at the turn of the century when the King of Spain requested a full census recording of all residents in Antequera in 1792. This was also the last year when racial classifications were consistently used in census recording practices. Colonial categories such as pardo, mestizo, and *indio* appeared only occasionally throughout the 1812 census in Antequera, before they disappeared entirely during the 1820s. By the nineteenth century, residents in Antequera and throughout the colony would undergo numerous social and political changes in the nineteenth century. Mexican Independence in 1821 contributed to the erasure of specific racial identifiers, and the abolition of slavery in 1829 marked the formal end of slavery in Mexico. The newly-formed Mexican government also restricted the use of racial categories in censuses. Hence, the 1790s was the last decade that included the systematic recording of people by racial categories, occupations, and households.

Late-colonial changes in Antequera are indicative of the shifts that occurred at the end of the colonial period and in the early nineteenth century. First, African-born persons no longer resided in the city by the late eighteenth century because transatlantic and interregional slave traffic had already declined by the 1730s. Moreover, enslaved people sold in Antequera during the eighteenth century were likely creoles, born to casta populations. The 1792 census, for example, officially did not include information on enslaved people, but it still reported 14 bondsmen and bondswomen who resided in Antequera. For the most part, these individuals were mulatos who worked for Spanish elites and colonial officials such as Manuel de Guendulain and an accountant of the Real Hacienda. Likewise, the Church still relied on enslaved people like

Joseph María Aponte, who was an enslaved cook at the Convento de Belen.[1] Thus, the vast majority of African descent people living in Antequera in the late period and early nineteenth century were American-born mulatos, pardos, and moriscos.

The absence of slaves in the 1792 census also indicates that the region was significantly less reliant on slave labor than earlier period. The transatlantic, interregional, and intercolonial traffic of captives to Oaxaca between 1650 and the 1730s supplied a labor force in the city of Antequera and the plantations in the broader Valley of Oaxaca. Spaniards had already capitalized on other labor institutions such as Indian slavery, the *encomienda*, and *repartimiento* systems in the early colonial period, but the demographic collapse of native populations during the Spanish conquest created a need for a labor force. African captives and creole slaves became a supplementary labor force in the city, and enslaved people would eventually outnumber Spaniards living in Antequera. Social and economic changes in the region would also spark shifts in the procurement and deployment of slaves in the colony. Slavery was already a dying institution by the early nineteenth century, and Spaniards shifted to relying on wage labor in the mid-to-late eighteenth century. In fact, Oaxaca's notarial archive only contains 138 slave sales processed between 1751 and 1800. This finding shows that the slave population had already significantly diminished by the nineteenth century. The notarial archive only contains one document that cites the manumission of dozens of slaves in the 1820s. On November 19, 1825, the government of the state of Oaxaca forced Matias Eduardo Valverde to manumit his slaves. On that day, he freed 50 men, 53 women, and 26 children from his sugar plantation named San Nicolas Ayotla, which was located in the jurisdiction of Teotitlan del Camino.[2] These findings

[1] Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Padrones vol.13.

[2] Archivo Histórico de Notarías del Estado de Oaxaca (AHNO), Protocolos Notariales (PN), José Ignacio Salgado, vol. 577, fs. 131-137.

thus support the idea that most enslaved women and men had already obtained their legal freedom prior to the mid-eighteenth century and a minority of slaves were manumitted in the nineteenth century. This trend occurred throughout the colony, and especially in cities such as Puebla and Mexico City. This shift in a reliance to wage labor occurred for various reasons. During the eighteenth century, the demand for slave labor and indigenous wage laborers moved from textile production in Puebla to the silver-producing regions in the northern part of the colony. This change affected the volume and routes of slave traffic in the colony. Slave traffic to the Valley of Oaxaca, for example, nearly ceased in the second half of the eighteenth century, which ultimately cut off Antequera's Spanish elites and landholders from acquiring African and creole captives.

The behavior of free and enslaved people also contributed to the rise of a free colored population in eighteenth-century Antequera. African-born and American-born slaves were subject to coerced labor in Antequera during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Men, women, and children including Miguel de la Flor, his mother, and his siblings toiled in the homes of Spanish elites as cooks, nannies, and caregivers. Some urban slaves were skilled artisans, and they constructed Antequera's secular and religious institutions that were critical to the city's development. Others labored with mestizos and Indians in the haciendas and sugar plantations in Antequera's surrounding regions. Despite their condition of enslavement, bondsmen and bondswomen found paths to legal and extralegal freedom. Intermarriage was one common strategy to attain manumission and opportunities for one's offspring. However, marriage was not the only avenue to liberty. Bondswomen such as María de la O. relied on family members for financial support to self-purchase and for assistance in navigating the judicial system. While there were many opportunities for liberty, manumission often left

bondsmen and bondswomen in precarious circumstances. Even when enslaved people had acquired sufficient funds for self-purchase, slaveholders were often reluctant to grant manumission, and they forced enslaved people, such as María, to petition for their freedom through the Spanish colonial courts. Other paths to legal freedom were just as risky. Apprentice contracts and manumission upon the death of slaveholders, for instance, could lead to years of conditional freedom. Still, these pathways eventually led to full liberty, and they ultimately helped to increase the population of colored skilled artisans who would work as free-persons in Antequera's textile mills during the cochineal boom in the eighteenth century.

Bondsmen and bondswomen also sought out extralegal freedoms both within and outside the confines of Spanish colonialism. Individuals such as Esteban de los Ángeles and Miguel de la Flor strategically used their own knowledge to navigate the judicial system and negotiate their conditions of captivity. During his Inquisition trial, Esteban expressed his discontent with the work conditions on the San Joseph plantation and he accused the majordomo of mistreatment. Moreover, Esteban's actions on and off of the plantation reveal the ways in which captives countered slaveholders and the institution of slavery. Fugitive slaves from Antequera often fled to and built new lives as free-persons in the Kingdom of Guatemala. Like many other slaves, Esteban refused to perform harsh labor, and he repeatedly fled the San Joseph plantation. He later expressed his grievances about this coerced labor to inquisitors. Thus, captives such as Esteban managed to change structures within slavery through their legal claims of mistreatment and their attempts to gain extralegal freedom. Likewise, Miguel de la Flor used his literacy to find many freedoms within the institution of slavery. First, he articulated his frustration with captivity in the courtroom. Second, as an urban slave, Miguel navigated both public and private spaces because he worked as a domestic servant and shopkeeper. Miguel was also literate, and

with this knowledge, he was able to write several manuscripts for religious officials, and he used these skills to write and illustrate his conceptualization of Catholicism. These extralegal freedoms did not directly increase the free colored population, but they reveal the ways in which bondsmen and bondswomen challenged slaveholders and their condition of captivity on an everyday basis.

By far, the most critical factors that led to the decline of slave labor and an increase in wage labor were mestizaje, an in-migration of laborers, and the recovery of the indigenous population in the late seventeenth century. By the 1670s, native populations had recovered from epidemics during the Spanish conquest. This population growth generally met the labor demands of Spaniards in the Valley of Oaxaca. This increase in the indigenous populations also led to an in-migration of laborers from the Valley who worked in Antequera as domestic servants and as skilled and unskilled laborers. Casta populations increased drastically between the 1660s and 1750s. During this period, free coloreds, mestizos, Indians, and Spaniards intermarried, and the progeny of these unions worked as wage laborers, apprentices, shopkeepers, personal servants, and artisans.

The populations of free pardos and mulato*s* were thus integrated into Antequera's urban economy, and even in the 1660s, these individuals resided in the city as property owners, militiamen, and laborers. Free coloreds also attempted to secure or negotiate their position in the city's social hierarchy. The illegitimate mulato son of Luis Ramírez de Aguilar, one of the wealthiest hacendados and members of the cabildo, petitioned to carry a sword and dagger during this period, and in 1668, a mulato militiaman named Mateo de la Serna petitioned for the right to bear arms. Mateo would eventually rise to be a leader in the black militias, and he

accrued a significant amount of wealth, including properties and enslaved people.[3] In addition to attaining upward social mobility, free coloreds fought to maintain their elevated social positions in the Spanish colonial courts. Catalina de los Reyes, for example, challenged the gendered and racialized attacks of Antequera's bishop and she petitioned her case to the Real Audiencia in order to retain her valuable property that was located in the center of the city. In short, free coloreds were dispersed throughout the city, and they belonged to multiple social classes of Antequera's social hierarchy.

The shift from a reliance on African slave labor to wage labor occurred for several reasons. In spite of the language that appears in manumission letters stating that slaveholders freed their slaves because of the "love and fidelity" that they felt for them, we know that many slaveholders were reluctant to free their slaves. And in many cases, slaveholders were utterly unwilling to grant manumission, even if their slaves could pay for their liberty. We also know the position of the *Siete Partidas*, which encouraged slaveholders to manumit their slaves. These factors undoubtedly affected slaves' abilities to challenge slaveholders and fight for their legal freedom in the Spanish colonial courts, which ultimately led to an increase in the population of free coloreds. Nonetheless, the primary causes in the decrease in slavery and the rise of the free population in Antequera were the agency of slaves and free persons, the multi-ethnic dynamic of Antequera, and growth in the city's economy and population in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The free colored population increased largely because of the efforts of free and enslaved women, men, and children who used personal earnings or savings from family members to purchase their freedom or that of their parents and children. On some occasions, mothers prioritized the purchase of their children's liberty over their own. And in other

[3] AGN, Reales Cédulas Duplicadas 16, 362; Reales Cedulas, vol. D23, exp. 91; Indiferente Virreinal, vol. 3823, exp. 5; vol. 4504, exp. 56; AHNO, PN, Diego Benaias, vol. 143, ff. 98; vol. 152, ff. 716.

circumstances, sons and daughters remained in captivity in exchange for the freedom of their parents because slaveholders preferred to retain young adult slaves who were more valuable than elderly bondsmen and bondswomen.

Antequera's multi-ethnic dynamic, which was tied to socio-economic growth in the city, also contributed to the rise of a free colored population. By the eighteenth century, Antequera had become a society comprised of Spaniards, mestizos, free coloreds, enslaved people, and Indians. As evidenced by census records and marriage registers, these residents in Antequera lived and worked with one another. As noted, social and economic growth during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries directly contributed to this multi-ethnic population because casta groups, in particular, intermarried at considerably high rates. Likewise, residential segregation of Nahuas in the early colonial period had eroded by the late eighteenth century, and neighborhoods that were previously dominated by indigenous groups became multi-ethnic barrios comprised of free coloreds, mestizos, and Indians. The inter-ethnic unions between Domingo de la Coca, Manuela, and Francisco, for instance, prove that free coloreds often cohabitated with other castas. Based on my analysis of barrios and streets included in the 1792 census, there were no racially-exclusive or socially-segregated spaces in Antequera in the late eighteenth century. On the contrary, casta groups were dispersed throughout the city, and in many cases, people of different ethnicities lived in the same household.

The racial fluidity of castas also contributed to a decline in the reliance on slave labor. By the late colonial period, the socio-racial terms of esclavo and negro were relatively uncommon in official colonial records. This change suggests not only a decline in the slave population but a sharp increase in inter-ethnic relations that produced a large middle and lower class of mulatos, pardos, castizos, moriscos, and mestizos. Moreover, the creation of new terms such as mulato

blanco and mulato prieto show that Spanish elites were still concerned with social difference in the late colonial era. In quotidian life, these terms would be mostly insignificant to the lower social classes because free-persons worked alongside ethnic others who were all skilled artisans, merchants, servants, and shopkeepers.

The mid-to-late eighteenth century was a lucrative period for Antequera's residents. Between 1740 and 1800, residents in Antequera witnessed the revitalization of the textile industry and the greatest economic and demographic growth that occurred during the entire colonial period. The population of Antequera, for example, grew threefold to over 18,000 residents. These changes occurred throughout the colony because of the Bourbon Reforms that sparked major social and economic growth. For instance, the opening up of markets facilitated the trade of cochineal to Europe. This valuable red pigment was even used to dye the British Redcoats! By the 1790s, lower class artisans and servants became the backbone of the textile industry, and free coloreds and other casta groups would learn skilled trades to eventually become blacksmiths, butchers, shoemakers, and tailors, among many other craftsmen.

Much work remains to be done on the African descent populations in colonial and modern Oaxaca. The early colonial presence of enslaved people in Oaxaca has not been comprehensively analyzed to fully consider the arrival, utility, and social lives of bondswomen and bondsmen in Antequera and its environs. Likewise, religious participation and ritual practices among free and enslaved people in the colonial period remains an unexplored subject. The writings of Miguel de la Flor are one gateway to explore this topic, but we must also reevaluate what Herman Bennett described as "racial consciousness" through participation in religious brotherhoods. Hence, we must also look into the moments in which free and enslaved people articulated their consciousness in various colonial spaces. In doing so, historians can

better understand how enslaved women and men conceptualized their own communities and institutions. There are also a number of unanswered questions for the late colonial era and the nineteenth century. For instance, what happened to this multi-ethnic society at the turn of the century? And how did nineteenth-century political changes affect free-coloreds' construction of casta and their everyday experiences in the Valley of Oaxaca? This population likely continued to reside in Antequera and its environs, but historians would need to trace individuals and families across multiple generations to provide a comprehensive analysis of demographic changes among the free-colored population. Moreover, as other historians have questioned, was this population merely "absorbed" into the broader social status of mestizo in the nineteenth century? Ben Vinson's work on free-colored militiamen and the research of John Milstead and Beau Gaitors offer some insight into race-making in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[4]

Hopefully, this dissertation will provoke more studies on free and enslaved people in colonial and modern Oaxaca. My dissertation has attempted to contextualize the agency of free and enslaved people in the broader structures of slavery and New Spain's racial hierarchies. I have considered the power of colonial legislation, which also affected colored-persons' understanding of their status, choices, and behaviors. Hence, I suggest that slavery shaped the lives of Africans and their descendants, but slaves and free-persons also affected slaveholders and the institution of slavery. Although the focus of this study has been on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I have identified the presence of enslaved people in the Valley of Oaxaca as

[4] John Milstead, "The Geography of Race in 19th-Century Mexico: Capitalism, Culture, and Language" and Beau Gaitors, "The Rhetoric and Reality of Race: Representations of African Descendants in 19th-Century Mexican National Discourse" (papers presented at the American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., January 2018).

early as the 1540s.[5] These early colonial personal servants arrived in Antequera with travel licenses from Cádiz. Similarly, the presence of bondsmen and bondswomen from Cairo in the early 1600s indicates that African captives arrived from various locations in the Atlantic world during this period. I have also established that most bozal and creole slaves arrived in Antequera between 1650 and the 1730s. The devastating epidemics of the sixteenth century led to a drastic decline of the native populations in the region and the growing city created a demand for labor during the seventeenth century. African imports met that growing demand to work in public works projects, construction, domestic service, and plantations. From that point forward, enslaved people would form a supplemental labor force in the city of Antequera and the Valley of Oaxaca.

This study has addressed several unresolved questions about slavery in colonial Oaxaca. Previous studies made brief references to slavery in Oaxaca, but thus far, only Lolita Brockington has conducted a full-scale survey of slavery in Tehuantepec. By conducting a systematic study of Oaxaca City's notarial archive and by focusing on slave sales, wills, and payment obligations, I have produced a comprehensive assessment of transatlantic, inter-colonial, and interregional slave traffic to Oaxaca between 1680 and 1710. Based on my research, at least 2,000 slave sales were processed during this thirty-year period. My study thus expands our scope of the transatlantic slave trade by showing that even though there was a decline in transatlantic slave traffic after 1640, interregional, inter-colonial, and contraband trade continued well into the first three decades of the eighteenth century. Captives not only arrived from West Africa and West Central Africa, but they also came from East Africa, Europe, and other parts of the Americas. Thus, the irregular slave trading period involved a variety of

[5] Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Indiferente Virreinal, 1963, L.9, F. 62; Indiferente Virreinal, 422, L.16, F.73, L.22, F.437R, L.16, F.104V-105R; Indiferente Virreinal 1952, L.3, F.9.

participants including British, French, Portuguese, and Spanish merchants, and a wide range of different practices for procuring enslaved people in New Spain. This traffic of enslaved men and women suggests that Antequera's social and economic growth created a demand for slaves and that Antequera was ultimately a society with slaves. Bondsmen and bondswomen were not the only laborers in this city, but they would often work side-by-side with mestizos, Spaniards, and indigenous laborers. This study has identified the kind of labor that enslaved people performed and the ways that Spanish elites perceived enslaved people. Like other Spanish colonial cities, slaves in Antequera were highly valuable, and on occasion, they were used as status symbols. Observations of travelers such as Thomas Gage reveal that these status symbols often contested the social order, but the sistema de castas would always place enslaved people at the bottom ranks of the social hierarchy. As in other slave societies in Latin America, bondswomen and bondsmen in Oaxaca challenged slaveholders in various ways. Enslaved people in Oaxaca rarely engaged in collective resistance. Instead, they conducted individualistic defiance by refusing to work, running away, and by challenging their masters in the Spanish colonial courts. Therefore, the interplay between slaveholders and the enslaved, and colonial institutions and slaves illuminates the strategies that slaves employed to articulate their resistance to slavery.

This dissertation also raises important points about inter-ethnic interactions between African descent people and ethnic others. It is clear that workspaces often facilitated cross-cultural contact, but did these interactions eventually lead to formal unions? My analysis of eighteenth-century marriage registers and census data reveals that most ethnic groups practiced endogamous marriage patterns, and less than half of free coloreds married ethnic others. However, official records do not capture the everyday interactions and informal unions that casta populations maintained. For instance, the relationships that developed between Domingo de la

Coca, his wife Antonia, and her lover Francisco implies that mestizos and free coloreds not only cohabitated, but they also celebrated, argued, and enjoyed one another's company. In other words, public and private spaces in this colonial city often involved frequent and ongoing cross-cultural exchanges.

This project sheds new light on the lives of free coloreds in Spanish America, and specifically in Antequera. As Douglas Cope has noted, the sistema de castas was a fragile mechanism of social control. As casta populations exploded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Spaniards feared the threat of a growing casta populace, and in response, they created new racial classifications that had legal rights and limitations tied to them. Furthermore, racial ideologies in colonial Latin America prohibited certain occupations. They also perpetuated inequities in Latin America, and they shaped the economic opportunities and everyday lives of free coloreds. Therefore, free coloreds were categorized as mulatos, pardos, and moriscos. These casta categories were stigmatized, and they would ultimately affect how these individuals were treated by Spanish elites and the Spanish colonial state. For instance, the term mulato was inherently derogatory because it referred to mules. In the early-to-mid colonial period, colonial officials perceived mulatos as the source of social unrest. The case of Catalina de los Reyes reveals several important aspects of the fragility of casta categories and the agency of free coloreds. As a property-owning woman, Catalina was an ordinary free-colored person in seventeenth-century Antequera. However, she defied the social order because she was a mulata who owned some of the most valuable property in the city.

Catalina's land dispute with the local bishop also indicates that Spanish elites, who often held secular and religious positions, were guardians of the status quo. The bishop relentlessly defamed Catalina in order to coerce her to sell her property. Catalina's actions show that free

coloreds were cognizant of the legal rights tied to their juridical status because she not only fought back in the Spanish colonial courts, but she appealed to the Real Audiencia and consequently won the case. Catalina thus contested the status quo because, even though she legally owned the property, she remained in a space that was socially exclusive to Spanish elites. Moreover, Catalina's self-identification as a parda in her legal testimony reveals some of the ways in which free coloreds attempted to secure their social status in local hierarchies. Catalina was labeled as a mulata, but she strategically self-identified as a parda to show that she was a high-ranking woman of color, which directly refuted the accusations that Antonio de Bohórquez had made of her character. In this way, Catalina created her own meaning of casta to her own benefit. Catalina's status as a property owner also established that the key to social status in seventeenth-century Antequera was race and property ownership. In the 1660s, most property in the Valley of Oaxaca was concentrated among a small group of Spanish elites, including the Bohórquezes. Hence, property owners with the largest and most valuable properties belonged to the upper tiers of the social hierarchy and casta groups and Indians were relegated to the lower social classes.

By the late eighteenth century, social status was defined by several factors, including race, property ownership, occupation, and access to political power. John Chance argues that race was not a critical marker of a person's ranking in the social ladder. However, I contend that race still played a prominent role in everyday life of the colony during the eighteenth century. My analysis of the 1792 census reveals that Antequera was comprised of three major social groups: the upper class, middle class, and the lower classes. Within these social stratifications, the upper class was almost exclusively made up of Spanish elites, and castas represented most people in the middle and lower classes. Therefore, race was indeed critical to a person's social

ranking because New Spain's social hierarchies and colonial legislation prevented free-coloreds from entering elite professions. Free-coloreds were undoubtedly an important part of the textile industry in Antequera because they were well-represented in the lower class of artisans who were predominantly tailors, shoemakers, and tanners. A minority of painters, musicians, merchants, and members of the religious orders indicates that free coloreds also held other roles in Antequera's society. Thus, free-coloreds in Antequera maintained professions that contributed to the economic development of the city and they held artistic roles, as individuals who both entertained wealthy Spaniards and produced images for the consumption of elites in the colony and Europe. Free African descent men and women also worked alongside other ethnic groups in public and private spaces. Likewise, free-coloreds often lived with ethnic others, and as evidenced by the relatively high rates of intermarriage, racial categories created by Spanish elites did not affect everyday interactions among lower-class casta groups.

This dissertation examined the presence and status of African descent people in colonial Oaxaca. In doing so, I assessed the meaning of Diaspora identities and experiences in this region. In the early colonial period, Antequera's colored populations were primarily African captives who provided skilled and unskilled labor for Spanish elites. During the seventeenth century, the definition of an African descent person changed to include free mulatos and pardos. Thus, the history of African descent people in colonial Oaxaca is not solely a narrative of slavery. Still, enslaved people also sought out legal and extralegal freedoms during this period. Free and enslaved people created their own meanings of their social identities and their experiences in Antequera. By the eighteenth century, Antequera had become a multi-ethnic society where a predominantly free colored population lived and worked with other ethnic groups including mestizos, Indians, and Spaniards. Therefore, the experiences of African descent people were

broadly defined by Spanish colonialism, but the everyday lives, interactions, and social identities of people in the Diaspora were shaped by their own construction of and their acceptance or defiance to Spanish colonial rule.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aguirre Beltrán, Gonzalo. *La población negra de México: estudio etnohistórico*. 2nd ed. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1972.

Baskes, Jeremy. *Indians, Merchants, and Markets: A Reinterpretation of the Repartimiento and Spanish-Indian Economic Relations in Colonial Oaxaca, 1751-1821.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Bauer, Arnold J. *Goods, Power, History: Latin America's Material Culture.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Bennett, Herman L. *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.

_____. *Colonial Blackness: A History of Afro-Mexico*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

Bigelow, Allison Margaret. "Women, Men, and the Legal Languages of Mining in the Colonial Andes." *Ethnohistory* 63, no. 2 (2016): 351-380.

Borah, Woodrow. *Silk Raising in Colonial Mexico.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1943.

Borucki, Alex, David Eltis, and David Wheat. "Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America." *American Historical Review* 120, no. 2 (2015): 433-461.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste.* Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Bowser, Frederick P. "The African Experience in Colonial Spanish America: Reflections on Research Achievements and Priorities." *Latin American Historical Review* 7, no. 1 (1972): 77-94.

_____. *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.

Bristol, Joan C. "Afro-Mexican Saintly Devotion in a Mexico City Alley." In *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora,* edited by Sherwin K. Bryant, Rachel Sarah O'Toole and Ben Vinson III, 114-135. Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

_____. *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches: Afro-Mexican Ritual Practice in the Seventeenth Century*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007.

Brockington, Lolita G. *The Leverage of Labor: Managing the Cortés Haciendas in Tehuantepec, 1588-1688.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989.

Burgoa, Francisco de. *Geográfica descripción de la parte septentrional del Polo Artico de la América y nueva iglesia de las Indias Occidentales y sitio astronómico de esta Provincia de Predicadores de Antequera, Valle de Oaxaca.* Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1989.

Burns, Kathryn. "Notaries, Truth and Consequences." *American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (2005): 350-379.

Camba Ludlow, Úrsula. *Imaginarios ambiguos, realidades contradictorias: Conductas y representaciones de los negros y mulatos novohispanos, siglos XVI y XVII.* México City: El Colegio de México, 2008.

Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz & Pernambuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study.* Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1983.

Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991.

Castillo Palma, Norma A. *Cholula sociedad mestiza en ciudad india: Un análisis de consecuencias demográficas, económicas y sociales del mestizaje en una ciudad novohispana (1649-1796).* Iztapalapa; Mexico City, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad and Unidad Iztapalapa, 2001.

Chance, John K. *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978.

Chance, John K. and William B. Taylor. "Estate and Class: A Reply." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21, no. 3 (1979): 434-442.

_____. "Estate and Class in a Colonial City: Oaxaca in 1792." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 19, no. 4 (1977): 454-487.

Chávez Carbajal, María Guadalupe. "Mestizaje y Reproducción en Valladolid. Siglo XVII." In *El Rostro Colectivo de la Nación Mexicana*, edited by María Guadalupe Chávez Carbajal, 36-42. Michoacán: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1997.

Childs, Matt. *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón. *Annals of His Time.* Translated and edited by James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doris Namala. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Cook, Karoline P. *Forbidden Passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.

Cope, R. Douglas. *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.

Córdova Aguilar, Maira Cristina. *Población de origen africano en Oaxaca Colonial, 1680-1700.* Oaxaca City, Mexico: Secretaría de Culturas y Artes de Oaxaca, 2012.

Curtin, Philip. *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.

Delgado Ribas, Josep M."The Slave Trade in the Spanish Empire (1501-1808): The Shift from Periphery to Center." In *Slavery and Antislavery in Spain's Atlantic Empire*, edited by Josep M. Fradera and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, 13-42. New York: Berghahn Books, 2013.

Fisher, Andrew B. "Creating and Contesting Community: Indians and Afromestizos in the Late-Colonial Tierra Caliente of Guerrero, Mexico." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 7, no. 1 (2006): https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed June 18, 2018).

Fisher, Andrew B. and Matthew D. O'Hara. Introduction to *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America.* Edited by Andrew B. Fisher and Matthew D. O'Hara. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

Gage, Thomas. *The English-American: A New Survey of the West Indies, 1648*. London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1928.

Gauderman, Kimberly. *Women's Lives in Colonial Quito: Gender, Law, and Economy in Spanish America*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.

Gay, José Antonio. *Historia de Oaxaca.* Mexico City: Editorial Porrua, 1982.

Gerhard, Peter. *The southeast frontier of New Spain*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Guardino, Peter. *The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750-1850.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005.

Hamnett, Brian R. "Dye Production, Food Supply, and the Laboring Population of Oaxaca, 1750-1820." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 51, no. 1 (1971): 51-78.

_____. *Politics and Trade in Southern Mexico, 1750-1821.* London: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Heywood, Linda M. and John Thornton. *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Hünefeldt, Christine. *Paying the Price of Freedom: Family and Labor Among Lima's Slaves, 1800-1854.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Klein, Herbert S. *The Atlantic Slave Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Klein, Herbert S. and Ben Vinson III. *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Klein, Herbert S. and Francisco Vidal Luna, *Slavery in Brazil.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Komisaruk, Catherine. *Labor and Love in Guatemala: The Eve of Independence.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013.

Landers, Jane. "African Ethnicity, Corporate Identity, and the Evolution of Free Black Towns in the Spanish Circum-Caribbean" In *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America.* edited by Jane G. Landers and Barry M. Robinson, 175-208. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, Press, 2006.

Lane, Kris. *Quito 1599: City and Colony in Transition.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002.

Las Siete Partidas, Volume 4: Family, Commerce, and the Sea: The Worlds of Women and Merchants. Translated by Samuel Parsons Scott, edited by Robert I. Burns. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

Lewis, Laura A. *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003.

Lindsay, Lisa A. and John Wood Sweet. Introduction to *Biography and the Black Atlantic.* Edited by Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Lira Vásquez, Carlos. *Arquitectura y sociedad: Oaxaca rumbo a la modernidad, 1790-1910.* Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2008.

Lockhart, James. *Nahuas and Spaniards: Postconquest Central Mexican History and Philology.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Lokken, Paul. "From the 'Kingdoms of Angola' to Santiago de Guatemala: The Portuguese Asientos and Spanish Central America, 1595-1640." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 93, no. 2 (2013): 171-203.

Mansferrer León, Cristina V. *Muleke, negritas y mulatillos: niñez, familia y redes sociales de los esclavos de origen africano en la ciudad de México.* México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2013.

Martínez, María Elena. *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.

Martínez Montiel, Luz María, *Presencia africana en Mexico.* Mexico City: CONACULTA, 1994.

McCaa, Robert. "Calidad, Clase, and Marriage in Colonial Mexico: The Case of Parral, 1788-90," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 64, no. 3 (1984): 477-501.

Motta Sanchez, J. Arturo. "Familias esclavas en el Ingenio de San Nicolás Ayotla, Teotitlán del Camino Real, Oaxaca." In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas,* edited by Adriana Naveda Chávez-Hita, 117-137. Xalapa, Mexico: Universidad Veracruzana, 2001.

Naveda Chávez-Hita, Adriana. *Esclavos negros en las haciendas azucareras de Cordova, Veracruz, 1690-1830.* Xalapa, México: Universidad Veracruzana, 1987.

Newson, Linda and Susie Minchin. *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish South America in the Early Seventeenth Century.* Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007.

O'Toole, Rachel Sarah. "As Historical Subjects, The African Diaspora in Colonial Latin American History." *History Compass* 11, no. 12 (2013): 1095-1097.

_____. *Bound Lives: Africans, Indians, and the Making of Race in Colonial Peru.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012.

_____. "To Be Free and *Lucumí:* Ana de la Calle and Making African Diaspora Identities in Colonial Peru." In *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora,* edited by Sherwin K. Bryant, Rachel Sarah O'Toole and Ben Vinson III, 73-94. Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

Owensby, Brian P. *Empire of Law and Indian Justice in Colonial Mexico.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.

Palmer, Colin A. "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora." *American Historical Association Perspectives* 36, no. 6 (1998): 1, 22-25.

_____. *Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America, 1700-1739.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981.

_____. *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Peralta Rivera, Germán. *El comercio negrero en América Latina (1595-1640).* Lima: Universidad Nacional Federico Villarreal, Editorial Universitaria, 2005.

Potsma, Johannes Menne. *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1815*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Proctor II, Frank Trey. "African Diasporic Ethnicity in Mexico City to 1650." *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora,* edited by Sherwin K. Bryant, Rachel Sarah O'Toole and Ben Vinson III, 50-72. Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

_____. *Damned Notions of Liberty: Slavery, Culture, and Power in Colonial Mexico, 1640-1769.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010.

_____. "Gender and Manumission of Slaves in New Spain." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 86, no. 2 (2006): 309-335.

Reales asientos y licencias para la introducción de esclavos negros a la América Española, 1676-1789. Ed. Fascimilar. Windsor; Mexico City: Rolston-Bain, 1985.

Reis, João Jose. *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Restall, Matthew. *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005.

_____. *The Black Middle: Africans, Mayas, and Spaniards in Colonial Yucatan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Rodríguez Blázquez, Ana María. "Penetración portuguesa en América a través del asiento firmado por la Real Compañia de Guinea en 1696." *Temas americanistas,* no. 4 (1984): 18-21.

Romero Frizzi, María de los Angeles, *Economía y vida de los españoles en la Mixteca Alta, 1519-1720.* Mexico City: INAH, 1990.

Rosen, Deborah A. "Women and Property across Colonial America: A Comparison of Legal Systems in New Mexico and New York" *Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture* 60, no. 2 (2003): 355-381.

Salvucci, Richard J. *Textiles and Capitalism in Mexico: An Economic History of the Obrajes, 1539-1840.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Sandoval, Alonso de. *Treatise on slavery.* Translated and Edited by Nicole von Germeten. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008.

Schmidt-Nowara, Christopher. *Slavery, Freedom, and Abolition in Latin America and the Atlantic World.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011.

Schwartz, Stuart B. *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Seed, Patricia. "Social Dimensions of Race: Mexico City, 1753." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 62, no. 4 (1982): 569-606.

_____. *To Love, Honor and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts Over Marriage Choice, 1574-1821.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.

Seijas, Tatiana. *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Seijas, Tatiana and Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva. "The Persistence of the Slave Market in Seventeenth-Century Central Mexico." *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 2 (2016): 307-333.

Semo, Enrique. *The History of Capitalism in Mexico: Its Origins, 1521-1763.* Translated by Lidia Lozano. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

Sierra Silva, Pablo Miguel. *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico: Puebla de los Ángeles, 1531-1706.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Soulodre-La France, Renée. "Slave Protest and Politics in Late Colonial New Granada." In *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America.* edited by Jane G. Landers and Barry M. Robinson, 175-208. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, Press, 2006.

Stoler, Ann. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Suárez Argüello, Clara Elena. *Camino real y carrera larga: La arriería en la Nueva España durante el siglo XVIII.* México, D.F.: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1997.

_____. "Fuentes para el estudio de transporte novohispano durante la seguna mitad del siglo XVIII." In *América Latina en la Historia Económica* 7 no. 13/14 (2000): 179-187.

Sweet, James H. *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

_____. "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought." In *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54 no. 1 (1997): 143-166.

_____. *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Tavárez, David. *The Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011.

Taylor, William B. *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972.

Terraciano, Kevin. *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca: Ñudzahui History, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

Thomas, Hugh. *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440-1870*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.

Thornton, John. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Twinam, Ann. *Purchasing Whiteness: Pardos, Mulattos, and the Quest for Social Mobility in the Spanish Indies.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.

Vega Franco, Marisa. *El tráfico de esclavos con América: asientos de Grillo y Lomelín, 1663-1674.* Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1984.

Velasco Murillo, Dana and Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, "Mine Workers and Weavers: Afro-Indigenous Labor Arrangements and Interactions in Puebla and Zacatecas, 1600-1700." In *City Indians in Spain's American Empire: Urban Indigenous Society in Colonial Mesoamerica and Andean South America, 1530-1810,* edited by Dana Velasco Murillo, Mark Lentz, and Margarita R. Ochoa, 104-127. Brighton; Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2012.

Velázquez, María Elisa. *Mujeres de origen africano en la capital novohispana, siglos XVII y XVIII.* México City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2006.

Vila Vilar, Enriqueta. *Hispanoamérica y el comercio de esclavos.* Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2014.

Vinson, Ben, III. "African (Black) Diaspora History, Latin American History—A Comment." *The Americas* 63, no. 1 (July 2006): 1-18.

_____. *Bearing Arms for His Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

_____. *Before Mestizaje: The Frontiers of Race and Caste in Colonial Mexico.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

_____. "Black Mexico and the Historical Discipline." In *Black Mexico,* edited by Ben Vinson III and Matthew Restall, 1-18. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009.

_____. "From Dawn 'till Dusk: Black Labor in Late Colonial Mexico." In *Black Mexico,* edited by Ben Vinson III and Matthew Restall, 96-135. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009.

_____. "West Side Story: Free-Black Labor in the Mexican Pacific during the Late Colonial Period as seen through the Revillagigedo Census." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 10, no. 3 (2009) http://muse.jhu.edu/

Von Germeten, Nicole. *Black Blood Brothers: Confraternities and Social Mobility for Afro-Mexicans.* Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2006.

Wade, Peter. "Rethinking Mestizaje: Ideology and Lived Experience." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37, no. 2 (2005): 239-257.

Yannakakis, Yanna. *The Art of Being In-between: Native-intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.